Vietnam Courier

A MONTHLY REVIEW No. 5 – 1987

- Renovation of Work Among Women
- Valuable Potentials
- Welcome to Vietnam
- Vietnamese Coastal Areas and Territorial Waters – Prospects of Economic Development

DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITIES

● *Chairman of the SRV National Assembly Nguyen Huu Tho receiving a Soviet Lawyers' Delegation (6 March 1987).*

● *Talk in Hanoi between the Vietnamese and Bulgarian economic delegations (10 March 1987).*

● *Chairman of the Council of Ministers Pham Van Dong receiving Lena Hjeim Wallen, Minister in charge of Swedish development aid (13 March 1987).*

Photos: VNA

THU VAN AND HER KHAT VONG DANCE

Thu Van, an artiste of the Thuan Hai theatrical troupe, was awarded a gold medal at the national artistic festival in 1985 for her performance of *Khat vong* (Burning Desire) dance, a creation by eminent artiste Dang Hung to improve the Cham popular dancing motif. Thuan Hai being the habitat of the Cham and Bani minorities is credited with having a rich tradition of music, and particularly dancing. The monotonous and lengthening prayers are enlivened by the foot stamping of the young girls dancing in tune to such musical instruments as Kanhi, Tapap, Saranay, Rale... After performing their ceremonial rites, the young girls in their Sunday bests dance following the palanquin, as part of their terrestrial joy. This is the source of inspiration of *Khat vong*.

All art lovers, even those who are not much acquainted with folk-dance, but who have a subtle sensibility and love for beauty, are moved to see the performance of *Khat vong*.

Thu Van has produced such an effect. Compared with other artistes, she goes in for dancing rather late: at 16, she performed for the Thuan Hai troupe while learning how to dance. To make up for the lost time, she works very zealously. Born into a family of music lovers, she has an intuition for music and dance. Under the guidance of Dang Hung, with the experience learnt from her predecessors and from her trips to the regions inhabited by the Cham together with having a well-shaped body, Thu Van lends herself pretty well to this traditional dance.

To see her perform on the stage, we have the impression that her gestures have something quite in contradiction with dancing: stillness. But she looks like a ballet dancer carved in stone.

For the spectators in Vietnam, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia *Khat vong* symbolizes the characteristics, energy and sentiments of the Vietnamese people. This is also the burning desire of dancer Thu Van.

DO QUANG HANH

TEN YEARS OF ACTIVITY OF THE THAI BINH BADMINTON RACKET FACTORY

Established in mid-January 1977, the factory is the first enterprise of the country making this article. It started almost from scratch: it had to care by itself for equipment, for working out the production process and for the training of workers...

One year after its founding, it sent its goods for sale on the home market and abroad. Under the trade-mark "Keo Pagoda" (a famous beauty spot of Thai Binh province), its articles are well appreciated by the customers.

In ten years of activity, the factory has made 1,450,000 rackets valued at over 50 million *dongs*; 950,000 rackets have been exported to five countries, getting a profit of 1,407,000 rubles and 50,000 dollars.

Though 1986 was a year fraught with difficulties for the factory, its production exceeded that of the previous years. In September 1986, a big typhoon demolished all its workshops and stores, and damaged over 70,000 rackets, causing a loss of 9 million *dongs*. But the factory still produced 250,000 rackets including 150,000 for export, with a profit exceeding the target by 64%. This was a result of the renovation of the management and the adoption of the cost-accounting system. All the links in the chain of production have been reorganized. A new norm of production has been adopted (four rackets per shift). The non-productive staff has been reduced and sent to work in the chain of production.

From an enterprise run by 50 cadres and workers with a floor space of 105 square metres at the outset, the Thai Binh racket factory has now become an enterprise employing 400 workers and employees with 7,500 square metres of floor space and 30 machines. Every year it turns out 250,000-300,000 rackets. At this rate, it is sure that this year, it will make still greater progress.

HONG SON

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Front Cover:

Phu Tu (Father and Child) peak — An Giang province.

Photo: MINH TRUONG

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BUILDING OF THE FIRST ANTIBIOTIC FACTORY IN VIETNAM

In a developing country of heavy demographic density like ours, the rate of infectious diseases is very high and our requirements in antibiotics very great. At present, on an average, each Vietnamese consumes only two grams of antibiotics a year. At this modest rate, 120 tonnes of antibiotics will be needed every year.

Surely, for lack of foreign exchange, we cannot meet our requirement with imported drugs. Since its outset, the Pharmaceutical Department of the Ministry of Health has worked out a plan for the manufacture of antibiotics in the country. Because of multiple reasons, particularly the processing of antibiotics in our climatic conditions, only in the eighties do we conduct the first experiments.

In 1980-1982, the Pharmaceutical College successfully test-produced oxy-tetracyline and the Industrial Institute in Ho Chi Minh City obtained the same success in the production of tetracycline in laboratories. We entered the second stage in 1984. We produced the first grams of oxy-tetracycline and tetracycline in 1985, and the first kilograms in November 1986.

On 5 February 1987, in Ho Chi Minh City, Pharmaceutical Factory No. 24 built with Soviet assistance a workshop for the experimental production of antibiotics to find appropriate data for the manufacture of antibiotics in tropical countries, thus paving the way for the third stage in the mass production of antibiotics in Vietnam.

As the initial capital is about 150 million *dongs*, a floor space of 5,000 square metres will be built (with a series of seven-storeyed houses as laboratories and a series of five-storeyed buildings for the chain of production and dependences).

This construction, expected to be completed in 1989, will be the first factory in Vietnam to produce antibiotics, primarily tetracycline.

It is anticipated that in a dozen years the antibiotics industry in Vietnam will step into stage 4, the stage of construction of factories for the production of large quantities of antibiotics to meet the requirement of 320-350 tonnes of this product at the beginning of the 21st century.

KIEN AN

CHESS IN VIET NAM

Six years ago, in December 1980, the Vietnam Chess Association was officially established but the Central Chess Club of Vietnam began its activities in Hanoi earlier, in 1978. Although it appeared rather late, this sport rapidly developed and spread to various localities, drawing thousands of participants.

Up to now the Vietnam Chess Association together with the General Department for Physical Culture and Sports have held six national championships — first and second classes — and four national contests for pioneers. This sport has been officially brought into the programme of competitions at the National Festivals of Physical Culture and Sports and the National Phu Dong Spartakiads (sport festivals for general education students).

In the first contests, only the chess players of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City won the highest places but in the two recent contests, the chess players of Quang Nam — Da Nang, Dong Thap, Quang Ninh, the Ministry of Higher Education and Secondary Vocational Education... also scored outstanding achievements.

Chess has developed most rapidly among students. The male and female chess champions in 1986 are Tu Hoang Thong (14 years old) and Ngo Huyen Chau (15 years old) who are both general education students. Other good chess players are also students of general education or higher learning like Hoang Nam Thang, Hoang Trong Thang, Nguyen Thanh Hoai, Tu Hoang Thai, Pham Huong Giang, Tran Thuy Trinh, Le Phuong Ngoc, Dang Vu Dung, Truong Xuan Vu...

The present level of the Vietnamese chess players cannot be gauged accurately for they have not yet participated in any international contest. However, the Soviet chess players and coaches who have come to Vietnam to compete or drill think that Vietnamese chess players have made big progress, the male ones are rated as Soviet masters of chess and the female, as abreast of their colleagues in Asia.

Together with pingpong, gymnastics and boxing, chess is receiving particular attention from the General Department for Physical Culture and Sports. In the coming years, we shall step up the training of coaches and players through drill and competition with foreign chess players so that our chess reaches a high level in Southeast Asia and approaches the advanced level in the world.

HONG SON

COOPERATION BETWEEN VIETNAM AND WIPO

At the invitation of the Vietnam State Commission for Science and Technology, an experts' team of the World Industrial Property Organization (WIPO), headed by its Deputy director Marino Pedillo paid in early February 1987 a friendship and working visit to Vietnam.

This visit was made in the framework of a plan co-sponsored by UNDP and WIPO for the establishment and strengthening of the system of industrial property in developing countries in the Asian-Pacific region.

The team met with the Vietnam State Commission for Science and Technology, the UNDP representative in Vietnam, and a number of Vietnamese departments concerned to exchange views on the programme for "strengthening the management of the activities related to industrial property and building a national centre of documents on inventions in Vietnam with a view to helping this country step up its activities related to industrial property in furtherance of economic development.

On this occasion, with the financial support of UNDP and in coordination with the Invention Department of the Vietnam State Commission for Science and Technology, WIPO organized a course on the "role of industrial property in the development of science and technology" for the benefit of managerial cadres of different services. This course was run in Hanoi from 12 to 17 February by WIPO experts.

XUAN CHIEN

CARE MORE FOR THE INTERESTS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

NGUYEN THI DINH
Member of the CPV Central Committee
President of the Vietnam Women's Union

Over the past five years, in the difficult conditions of the country, Vietnamese women have overcome countless trials in both social and family life to carry out their functions as citizens, mothers and wives.

The Vietnam Women's Union has striven hard to conduct practical activities, and to motivate women for a good implementation of the Party's policies and options. At the same time, it has paid special attention to the woman's function of being a mother and bringing up children. It has also devoted its care to the life and health of women and children.

After the Sixth Party Congress, the country has entered a new period requiring a genuine renovation of our way of thinking, style of work, organizational and cadre work in all branch, at all levels, including the work among women. The activities of the Union branches at various levels over the recent period have been marred by administrative methods of guidance, stereotyped ways of working, lack of dynamism and creativeness. Therefore, renovation here should start with a correct and rational definition of the functions and tasks of the Union committees at all levels.

The National Congress of Vietnamese Women will be held in 1987. One of its major tasks will be to define the functions and tasks of the Vietnamese women in the new juncture, concentrating on the main tasks:

— To educate and form new, socialist women, to motivate them for active participation in the implementation of the political and economic tasks of the Party and State, especially the three major economic programmes set by the Sixth Party Congress.

— To care for the interests and life of women and children. To this effect, the Vietnam Women's Union, together with State organs, should take part in studying and working out the laws and socio-economic policies directly related to the interests of women and controlling and supervising the good implementation thereof. It should give guidance in matters concerning the specific features and functions of women, such as family, maternity, bringing up of children...

— To continue to expand international activities.

Women account for 65% of the workforce. In the coming period, a main task of the women's union branches at various levels is to care for the interests of women and children. To do a good work in this respect is to contribute to the implementation of the Party's social policies, to bring into full play all human capacities, and to regard serving human beings as the loftiest goal.

At present, our country is beset with socio-economic difficulties. To create favourable working and living conditions for the working people in general and for women in particular is a task that should be given more adequate attention. In many places, too many women are still engaged in heavy and harmful-to-health jobs. There is a serious decrease in women's health in a number of factories and enterprises. In addition, women have to take care of their families while they are engaged in social activities.

For women, household work is no less heavy. According to sociological surveys, women have to devote no less than 90% of spare time to household work, shopping... So they have no time left for further studies, reading books and newspapers, going to the pictures, improving their cultural and social knowledge. That is why Union committees at various levels should take the initiative to coordinate with Party committees and various services to get acquainted with the situation, and the women's opinions and aspirations, and on this basis to make suggestions as to the policies related to women's working and living conditions. As an immediate step, we should focus on working out regulations concerning allowances, subsidies, maternity

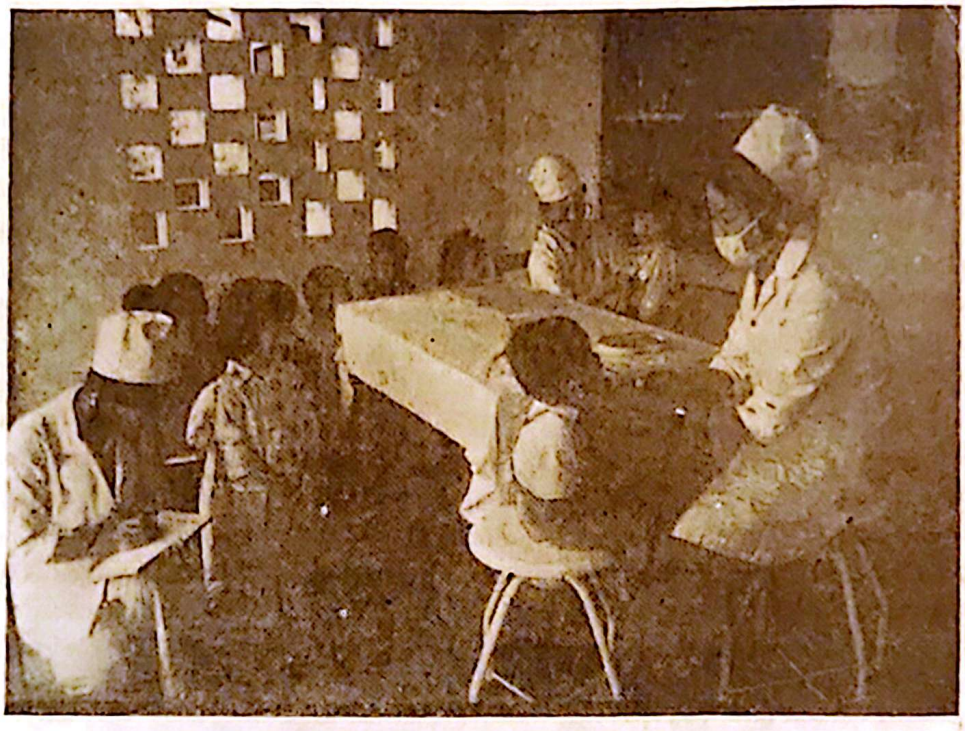
leave, bringing up of children, nursery, medical examination and treatment for women and children, the building of maternity hospitals, health stations; we should strive for a good implementation of the policy in the rear areas concerning the army. We should see to the production and distribution of essential articles for the life of women and children. We should expand service activities in wards and communes, organize mutual assistance in purchases and sales, open popular inns, organize the repair of household utensils. With regard to the policies and regulations already issued, we should carry out constant control so as to ensure an effective implementation thereof and help reduce women's difficulties.

The Union committees at various levels cannot by themselves implement the above-mentioned work, therefore assistance and coordination of Party committees and administrative committees at various levels are imperative.

All union branches from central down to grassroots level should genuinely renovate their way of thinking and doing, and carry out concrete activities bringing about practical interests. Only by so doing can we get women closer to the Union and make the work among them more effective.

Women's Union cadres, especially those in leading positions should not work simply as ordinary cadres, but should grasp the Party's policies and options, have a deep knowledge of all social and economic problems, be dynamic and creative in their work among women. Cadres at various levels should improve their research capacity and make suggestions to the Party committees and the administrations about major policies and measures for the work among women.

In the renovation of the work among women, we should try to learn from the experience of other countries in the world. This is also a terrain in which Vietnamese women can carry out our Party's foreign policy, strengthen our solidarity with women in other countries in the fight for peace, national independence, democracy and social progress. Vietnamese women have expanded and will keep expanding their international activities. Thus we have expanded contacts, strengthened relations with the socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union, Laos and Kampuchea, strengthened our solidarity with, and support for the just struggle of women and peoples in Asia, Africa and Latin America against imperialism, neo-colonialism, racism and apartheid. We have strengthened our relations with women in the Asian-Pacific region, thereby contributing to turning it into a zone of peace and stability. ●



Periodical medical check-up for children in a kindergarten.

Photo: THU HOAI

RENOVATION OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING

DANG DANH ANH,
Deputy Director of the Institute for Vocational Training

There exists in our society a fairly generalized tendency to set light store by manual labour and to regard higher education as the only road to advancement. The image of the workers is most hazy in the mind of the school youth. This is shown by the following figures: Of the general education students who have been asked questions on this subject, 89.4% have replied that they would like to enter a higher education establishment, 5.9% like to choose other careers, only 4.7% want to become workers. In answer to our question, 12.4% of the students in the 2nd year of a vocational school say that they would like to change their occupation, 17.4% are lukewarm as to their profession, 3.4% intend to give up their career (the figure is as high as 33% in the construction branch), the remaining ones are non-committal.

To renovate our way of thinking in the training work, we must first affirm the position and role of the vocational training branch in socio-economic development and in the fostering of worthy young workers to strengthen the ranks of the working class, the main force in the industrialization of the country. We must persuade the major part of general-education school pupils to willingly enter vocational schools and choose a career consistent with their capacity and with the requirements of society. To encourage pupils to learn a trade, the State must work out a policy to grant them advantages, chiefly with regard to those who serve their apprenticeship in heavy and harmful-to-health industrial branches.

There are two ways to proceed. The first is to reach the stage of mechanization through handicraft, and the second is to go directly to mechanization and automation. In the overall programme of cooperation in the study of scientific and technological progress till the year 2000 of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), signed in Moscow in December 1985, micro-electronics, electronic computers and robots are given pride of place. The 17th Conference of heads of the vocational training services of the socialist countries held in Czechoslovakia in September 1986 affirmed the urgency of training skilled workers in the context of widespread application of micro-electronics, computers and robots. Today in our country, there are 12 branches using automation or semi-automation. In prevision of technological progress, we suggest that the State works out a plan to train operators of automatic equipment; at the same time, we must give right now to the students of vocational schools a minimum knowledge about automation, the role and prospects of the use of electronic computers in the national economy.

To solve the problem of career orientation for millions of young people in accordance with the spirit of the Sixth Party Congress, we suggest that all the 400 districts in our country open vocational training centres; all the 93 universities and colleges, the 300 or so secondary vocational schools, the 313 professional schools, the 2,500 factories, workshops and enterprises, the 2,000 agricultural farms and forest-yards, the 16,334 agricultural cooperatives, the tens of thousands of handicraft cooperatives, the scientific associations and mass organizations, should open short-term training courses for the youth. "Professionization" of the youth should be the common slogan of our entire society. Only in this way can we help the youth solve the present problem of finding a career. ●

THE OVERSEAS VIETNAMESE COMMUNITIES

HOANG BICH SON
Head of the Central Commission for Overseas Vietnamese

The settling of Vietnamese communities in foreign countries is described by some authors as a *diaspora*. This word, as may be recalled, was originally used in reference to the dispersion abroad of Jews following the disappearance of their land from the world map. Of course, it has now taken on a new semantic content but I would not use it for I wish to emphasize that the Vietnamese communities overseas are part and parcel of the Vietnamese nation. Such is the view of both the Vietnamese revolutionary State and of those communities themselves.

The first overseas Vietnamese communities took shape nearly a century ago, after the conquest of Vietnam by the French colonialists: they lived scattered in China, Thailand, Laos, Kampuchea and then, with the development of the colonial regime, in French New Caledonia and a number of other French colonies. During the two recent Indochina wars, more Vietnamese left their country than ever before, and after the collapse of the US neo-colonial regime in South Vietnam in 1975 together with the fall of the Saigon puppet administration, international forces hostile to Vietnam organized in pursuance of well-known political aims large-scale movements of Vietnamese people abroad: At present, overseas Vietnamese communities comprise over one million people, living in more than 40 countries. Most of them look forward to a long-term settlement, owing to the objective situation both in Vietnam and in the world.

The salient feature of the Vietnamese living in foreign countries is that they still keep their Vietnamese identity in spite of their incorporation into the local populations. An opinion poll conducted in late 1985 among Vietnamese living in the United States — who account for half the total number of overseas Vietnamese — shows that 92% of them dream of Vietnam in their sleep, 89% are proud of being Vietnamese and 88% want to keep their Vietnamese names. One can say that among the overseas Vietnamese only a very few reactionaries are hostile to their homeland, while most of the rest have preserved a national spirit, turn their thoughts to the country and a good many are ardent patriots. The common aspiration of our fellow-countrymen abroad is to be able one day to visit their native country, thinking of such journeys as real pilgrimages to the ancestral land and considering themselves exiles so long as these pious trips cannot be accomplished. Many old folks hope to return to the country before they die, and failing this, that their remains would be sent back there. If this, too, cannot be done, their ultimate wish is that their ashes be dropped into the Pacific and that one day they would drift to the shore of Vietnam. As President Ho Chi Minh clear-sightedly said: "All Vietnamese are potential patriots". Hence we can rightly regard the overseas Vietnamese communities as part and parcel of the nation. Naturally they show specific characteristics owing to the long time spent in foreign lands and the influence of local economic, social and cultural conditions. That is why their effort to preserve their national character, language and tradition is a tremendous one. Their special concern is the safeguarding of their Vietnamese identity by the youth, particularly those born and raised in their countries of residence.

Although the total overseas Vietnamese population is only about that of a province at home, it has great potentials especially in the field of science and technique. According to a rough estimate, about 300,000 Vietnamese intellectuals are living in capitalist countries — their numbers constantly increasing with the addition of the educated youth. Many of the latter have received advanced scientific and technical training and some are scientists of world renown. Not a few have had years of practical experience in important branches of activity and hold senior positions in business and scientific organizations. Many play a direct part in modern industrial designing and production and have been able to keep abreast of new development in science,

technology and management. It is widely believed in many foreign countries that the Vietnamese communities there have fairly quickly acceded to senior scientific, technical and cultural positions. Thus there are vast possibilities for overseas Vietnamese intellectuals to contribute to scientific and technical development and generally to national construction at home. Recently they have made valuable initial contributions to progress in the country in such fields as electronics, informatics, medicine, biology...

In the economic field, overseas Vietnamese communities have sizable potentials although they do not control as yet a large amount of capital and big business enterprises. If a correct policy is applied in this field, it should be possible for us to secure large amounts of hard currency, equipment and materials for national development, as is being done by many countries.

As overseas Vietnamese communities secure more stable living conditions and have less to worry about their present status, they will think more of the past and of their native land. As if moved by a law of nature, the Vietnamese living scattered in the world will turn their thoughts more and more to their country, as sunflowers turn toward the sun.

The movement of patriotic overseas Vietnamese started nearly 70 years ago when Uncle Ho founded the Association of Vietnamese Living in France in 1918. Through this organization, he turned those Vietnamese into a force struggling for national rights. He left a most precious heritage — ideological, organizational and practical — concerning the mobilization of the Vietnamese living in foreign countries. The movement of patriotic overseas Vietnamese has by now widely developed in 16 countries and undergone many trials, promoting patriotic traditions and contributing to the struggle for national independence, reunification, construction, and defence.

During the first war of resistance (1945-1954) overseas Vietnamese united in the Association of Patriotic Vietnamese courageously militated in France itself in co-ordination with the resistance at home. A number of intellectuals who had been among the first students to go abroad returned home and served the country in combat and production, many of them later becoming heroes and senior cadres. During the war of resistance against US aggression, Vietnamese residents in many capitalist countries — including the US — launched a vigorous movement of profest against the US aggressors and their puppets, setting bright examples of patriotism and uprightness.

Since our country was completely liberated, the patriotic movement of overseas Vietnamese has assumed new features. Thanks to the prestige derived from the victory gained by their people and the powerful support of their now completely independent and free country, this movement now has a political position it could not have in the past. On the other hand, it now meets with new difficulties having to cope with imperialist stooges who were driven out of the country and have regrouped in the US, Australia and other countries. It has also been affected by the difficulties facing the country. In spite of all this, it has overcome all trials, stood firm and developed. The associations of patriotic Vietnamese in different countries have mobilized overseas Vietnamese communities and caused them to unite and help one another in daily life, turn their thoughts to their homeland and struggle against wicked elements, former members of the puppet army and administration and reactionary political parties. The associations also work hand in hand with local progressive organizations to support the just cause of our country and other countries.

The Communist Party of Vietnam and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam highly appreciate the patriotism and the potentials of the overseas Vietnamese communities. They have made an important contribution to the struggle for national independence and are actively contributing to national construction. After completing the national liberation revolution, we have embarked upon socialist building, in accordance with the law of history. However, not all Vietnamese abroad are conscious of this necessity, particularly now that the country is experiencing countless difficulties due both to objective factors and to serious and prolonged shortcomings in socio-economic leadership. But in any event, one can say that the Vietnamese living in foreign countries are more and more conscious of the fact that in our time, love of one's country and love of socialism are at one, for only socialism can bring genuine prosperity and genuine social justice to one's people. In the light of the Resolution of the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is perfecting its policies so that the Vietnamese living in foreign countries are more and more closely bound to the national community and can fulfil the great endeavour which the latter expects of them. ●

OPPORTUNITY TOWARDS NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

With deep concern for the common home of Europe, the Soviet Union has proposed that the question of intermediate-range missiles in Europe be separated from the package of questions in the disarmament talks. It has also proposed the immediate signing of an agreement on the removal of intermediate-range missiles of the United States and the Soviet Union from Europe. It has further declared that immediately after this agreement comes into effect, it will withdraw all its long-range tactical missiles stationed in the German Democratic Republic and the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia as a response to the earlier deployment by the US of Pershing 2 and Cruise missiles in Western Europe. Along with the implementation of this agreement, the Soviet Union and the United States would reduce the number of their nuclear warheads of this range to 100 in Soviet Asian territory and 100 on American soil. This is a very important Soviet initiative aimed at finding a stable solution that would safeguard peace and security both in Europe and in the other parts of the world.

In recent years, the situation in Europe has become increasingly strained due to the bellicose policy of imperialism. As part of the arms race and in an attempt to gain military superiority and oppose socialism, the imperialist forces have stockpiled there important quantities of nuclear, chemical and other weapons of mass destruction. The United States has deployed in Western Europe hundreds of Pershing 2 and Cruise missiles which, together with its other military forces, form an offensive arc directed at the Soviet Union and the other European socialist countries. On the other hand, it has conducted an intensive campaign of distortion aimed at sowing national enmity and spawning the seeds of conflicts and war. All this constitutes not only a threat to the socialist countries, but has also become a real threat to the existence of all nations in Europe and in the world at large.

As a matter of fact, the nuclear arms race pursued by the United States has not been confined to Europe. It has assumed a global character and is aimed at placing the nuclear burden on the whole world, threatening the existence of mankind. In that context, with deep concern for the survival of our planet, in January 1986, the Soviet Union put forth a program of historic significance for the elimination of nuclear weapons through phases. The concrete solutions proposed by it encompass a wide range of questions: offensive strategic weapons, medium-range missiles, space weapons and nuclear tests. It is logical to seek an integrated solution to these issues. However, in order to continue its nuclear arms race, especially its Star War program, the United States, under the pretext that the Soviet Union demands a package solution, has refused to implement what it has agreed upon. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union is maintaining its principled policy of striving for a world without nuclear weapons. And to attain this lofty objective, it has spared no effort. Its new initiative to separate the question of intermediate-range missiles in Europe from the nuclear disarmament package manifests the Soviet people's ardent love for peace. It also demonstrates the high sense of responsibility of the Soviet Union toward the destiny of the European nations. This new proposal stems from a new thinking in the nuclear age, from confidence in its own strength, in the just cause and in reason. It is consistent with the peace aspiration of the broad masses of people in Europe and the world. This is a very good opportunity for the US side to show its desire for nuclear disarmament. World public opinion is demanding that the United States fully respond to this good-willed proposal of the Soviet Union. ●

THE GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN VIETNAM AND SWEDEN

From the first days of the US imperialists' aggression against Vietnam, a strong mass movement in support of the Vietnamese people's struggle for independence and freedom developed everywhere in Sweden. Top leaders, heads of political parties and mass organizations took to the street. The Swedish Government authorized the holding in Stockholm of important international conferences such as the International Tribunal to judge the US war crimes in Vietnam. From such forums, appeals were issued calling on all those who cherish peace, independence, freedom and human dignity to help push up the Vietnamese people's struggle until final victory. With deep emotion, our people will remember for ever the image of the late Prime Minister Olof Palmer and other outstanding political and social activists collecting signatures on the joint appeal of the Swedish political parties condemning the cruel American war of aggression in Vietnam.

After the restoration of peace in Vietnam, the relations between the two countries have further developed. The Swedish Government and people are keen on helping our people do away with the heavy aftermaths of the war. Both the Olof Palmer Government in the past and the present Government of Prime Minister I. Kansul have actively supported the reconstruction of Vietnam. Prime Minister I. Kansul has affirmed that the Swedish Government and people resolutely follow the path of the late Prime Minister, Olof Palmer, and continue to lend the Vietnamese people a hand in national construction: he is confident that the friendly relations between Sweden and Vietnam will develop with each passing

day. In this spirit, the Swedish Government and people have helped our people build important establishments such as the Bai Bang Paper Mill in Vinh Phu, the Olof Palmer Pediatric Hospital in Hanoi, the Uong Bi Hospital; they have also helped us restore and enlarge the Thu Duc Electric Power Plant. We are glad to note that in spite of inevitable difficulties due to the aftermath of many years of war, these works have helped us resolve part of our problems of shortage of paper, of protection of the health of the working people. We heartily thank the Swedish Government and people for their precious support and assistance. ●

FOREIGN DEBTS – A MAJOR PROBLEM IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The burden of foreign debts is a burning international topic, particularly in Latin America. That is why the decision of the Brazilian Government announced on 20 February 1987 to postpone the payment of interests for 90 days has elicited immediate support from many Governments and public opinion in Latin America and developing countries.

The Brazilian economy has been bled and exhausted because of foreign debts. In the past 15 years, Brazil has had to pay 153,207 million dollars of debts and interests to foreign, chiefly US, banks.

The situation is similar in almost all developing countries. According to figures released by the World Bank, the foreign debts of 130 developing countries in 1986 rose to 1,035 thousand million dollars, a 43% increase over the previous year. They are expected to reach 1,080 thousand million dollars by the end of this year. The most indebted countries are Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, the Philippines, Nigeria, Uruguay, Venezuela.

Brazil's decision — albeit a limited one — has been highly appreciated by Latin American countries as a courageous act marking a turning-point in dealing with the financial and economic relations of the developing countries. It impels these countries to forge ahead and take a common action against the harsh exploitation by imperialism and neo-colonialism, for a new international economic order. As government leaders in a number of Latin American countries have stressed, the creditors should understand that the foreign debts of the developing countries are the result of an unfair exchange... As a matter of fact, the developing countries are unable to pay all their debts, and how can they pay foreign debts by sacrificing their national interests and strangling their own economy. Obviously this situation cannot go on indefinitely. The capitalist creditor countries should reconsider their outmoded mechanism and meet the legitimate demands of the developing countries.

The problem of foreign debts of the developing countries has actually become one of the most important international issues. The accumulation of debts means an increasingly serious economic and social situation in these countries while the US octopus keeps sucking from them hundreds of billions of dollars a year to further its nuclear-warmongering policy, trampling upon the independence and sovereignty of the nations.

The struggle of Brazil and other developing countries for a satisfactory solution to the problem of debt-payment has had strong repercussions. It is inseparable from the broad struggle of the people around the world against imperialism and neo-colonialism, for peace, national independence, democracy and social progress. ●

THE PHILIPPINES AND THE US SCHEMES

According to Manila reports, in late February and early March last, the Pentagon brought to the Clark Air Base another 4,000 US Marines. At the same time, US military installations in the Philippines have been built at a quick tempo. Joint tactical manoeuvres have been repeatedly carried out in areas adjacent to the Clark Air Base and the Subic Naval Base. These US military activities are a cause for concern and vigilance for public opinion in the region.

It is common knowledge that the Philippines have a special strategic position in Southeast Asia, and in the Asian-Pacific region which, according to Western experts, will be a region of prime importance in the 21st century. This region is undergoing swift development and possesses great potentials. An outstanding feature is the powerful development of the struggle for peace and against nuclear war. For many years now, Washington has been carrying out a strategic shift from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. In this strategic plan, the increase of the strength of the US armed forces in the Philippines has been given special priority by the Pentagon.

One might ask: Why has the US increased its military manoeuvres here at this moment when the situation in the Philippines is undergoing complex developments. There is only an answer: the US wants to check a democratic development process detrimental to its interests.

Since Mrs Corazon Aquino became President, there has been a seething situation in the Philippines. The new Government has to cope with many thorny problems at home. In face of a strong development of the movement for

(Continued on page 15)

A POTENTIALITY BEING AROUSED

A tourist who visited our country lauded it as follows: "The Creator who made the earth has granted Vietnam great privileges indeed". Many visitors have expressed the same opinion: "Vietnam is a country which can entirely rely on tourism."

The future can be so. But at present the touristic service in our country still has a lot of work to do. The privileges of nature do exist: Lying on the shore of the Pacific Ocean in a monsoon-swept tropical region, with an area of 332,000 square kilometres, Vietnam possesses forests and seas, mountains, hills and plains. Its 3,260-kilometre coastline is mostly made of fine sand-banks and studded from north to south with famous sea resorts such as Tra Co, Do Son, Sam Son, Cua Lo, Nha Trang, Vung Tau... In the north, with its 3,000-odd islands of lime stone rocks mirrored in its dark waters, the Ha Long Bay is known as a marvel in the world. In the mountain region, Chapa distinguishes itself as a beautiful townlet shrouded in mist and as a garden of delicious peaches. In the south, the tourist will be pleased to make a stay at Da Lat, a mountain resort full of flowers and beautiful villas nestled on pine-clad hills. In the Central Highlands, he can get acquainted with the original culture of the minority people. In Hue, he can visit the palaces and tombs (of the Nguyen kings, 19th and early 20th century) now being restored and maintained with UNESCO assistance. Modest in size, these monuments look very aesthetic in their Oriental style. Many foreign visitors and, of course, all the Vietnamese know about Huong Tich pagoda, located in the apricot-producing region of Ha Son Binh province, which, each year, attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors coming as pilgrims or to contemplate its beauty. It is there that boys and girls easily make acquaintance with one another. They will bring back ripe apricots to make alcoholic and soft drinks, as in this region these fruits are most fragrant and fleshy.

The tourists who are interested in contemporary Vietnamese history like to go to Dien Bien Phu in Lai Chau province where over thirty years ago a historic battle took place putting a permanent end to French colonialism's rule over this country. Debris of French tanks are still strewn on Hill A1. The legendary Ho Chi Minh trail, bearing witness to the Vietnamese people's war against US aggression, will also be open to tourists.

Tourism is a nascent branch in Vietnam, being set up in 1960. Its development has been hampered by the socio-economic difficulties of the country.

Now the Vietnam General Department of Tourism is composed of 35 companies set up in various provinces, cities and special zones. Ten touristic centres have been established: Hanoi, Ha Long Bay, Hue, Nha Trang, Da Lat, Vung Tau, Ho Chi Minh City, etc. At the 20th International Touristic Fair held in West Berlin in early March 1987, the touristic programme presented by Vietnam has drawn the attention of many visitors. In 1986, 17 touristic firms in Denmark, Italy, the Philippines, Finland, Switzerland, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, established relations with Vietnam in this respect.

The Vietnamese touristic services are working out a joint programme for the three Indochinese countries. In May 1986, a touristic agreement was signed between Vietnam and Kampuchea. In December 1986, two trips were organized for foreigners to visit Angkor in Kampuchea. In January 1987, a touristic agreement was signed with Laos to make it possible for a touristic programme involving Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea to be carried out in 1987.

1986 was also the first year when Vietnam tourism organized overseas trips for Vietnamese tourists.

In summer 1987, hotels in such touristic centres as Hanoi, Ha Long, Hue, Nha Trang, Ho Chi Minh City, will be upgraded or built according to international standards so as to accommodate about 100,000 foreign tourists a year (not including Soviet winter residents).

Hunting will be organized for foreigners in 1987, beginning with the shooting of water-fowls.

(Continued on page 15)

Nha Trang is a beautiful health and sea resort well-known in Vietnam with its bright sunlight, white sand, blue water, shady coconut and filao-pine trees.

Once in Nha Trang, you will have an opportunity to visit such vestiges and beauty spots as Thap Ba (Lady Tower), Hon Chong (Husband Peak)... A boat will take you to Tri Nguyen fish-pond. If you like, you can go farther to off-shore picturesque salangane islands, Hon Tre, Hon Tru... You can swim and then have lunch in the open air at Hon Mun.

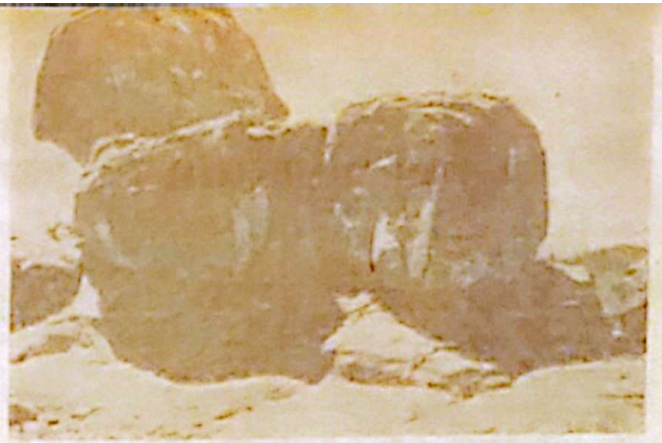
Should you take delight in a setting of tropical flowers and fruits, you will be invited to Dien An cooperative in the town suburbs where you will find trees and plants laden with fruits: banana, orange, jackfruit, papaw, rambutan, mango...

The tourist hotels in Nha Trang are highly praised. Thang Loi hotel, in particular, has won fame with its dishes of pigeons stewed with coconut, shrimps rolled with bird-eggs...

Lying in the central part of Vietnam, Nha Trang is a tourist centre frequented by a lot of visitors, both Vietnamese and foreign.

THUY PHUONG

WELCOME TO NHA TRANG



1. The sea at Nha Trang.
Photo: MINH LOC

2. Jamboas.
Photo: VNA

3. A sand beach.
Photo: VNA

4. Husband Peak.

5. Da Bridge leading to the centre of the city.
Photo: VNA

6. Thap Ba.
Photo: PHUNG TRIEU

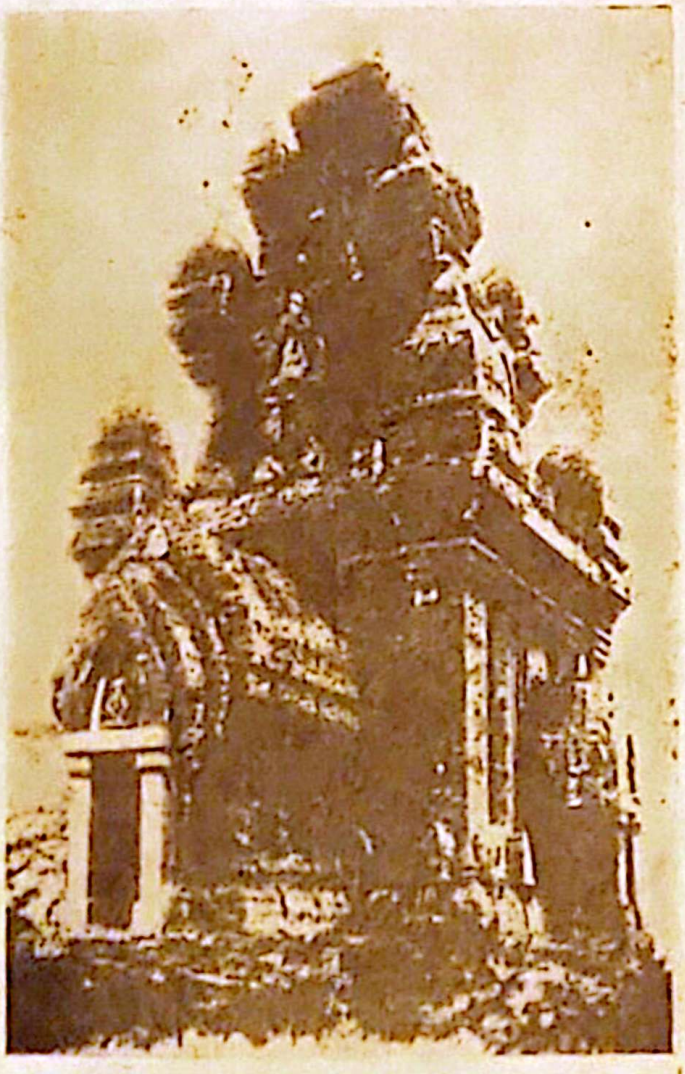
MY SON CULTURAL VESTIGE
A CHAM ARCHITECTURAL AND SCULPTURAL CENTRE

My Son, Tra Kieu, Dong Duong, Tra Ban, Binh Dinh... are familiar places in Quang Nam — Da Nang province which constitute a historical landmark of Champa, the vestiges of which are Cham towers, a superb architecture of a nationality in the large family of Vietnamese nationalities. The most famous is My Son, which French historians formerly called "My Son Sanctuary" or "Valley of Dynasties".

My Son lies 55 km southwest of Da Nang. A winding road bordered with cliffs leads to a narrow valley ensconced between "Rang Meo" (Cat's Teeth) rocky mountains the jarred peaks of which look so strange at sunset.

The My Son sanctuary about 1,000 metres wide by about 1,800 metres long — is a huge architectural ensemble of towers, temples and steles which the Cham kings erected for the cult of their gods. In the past the Cham kings worshipped Siva (god of war and destruction), Uma (wife of Siva), Brahma (the creator of the universe), Vishnu (the preserver of the universe) along with the gods of the earth, the wind, space and fire. After the first wooden temple was burned late in the fourth century, King Brahjra Vayman I had a more solid tower built. The succeeding dynasties added more works to the sanctuary until the 12th century when the Cham kings withdrew to the south. From that time, the My Son sanctuary fell into oblivion. It was discovered and studied only at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. An archaeological excavation at My Son which lasted 16 months restored its true value. 260 statues, artifacts and ornaments were collected and a Cham museum was set up in Da Nang. Most of the artifacts were made of sandstone and, a few, of marble. The My Son vestiges include 68 works divided into eight groups of temples and towers only 15 of which have remained but in a heavily damaged state as a result of the US B.52 bombing raids in late 1969.

As in other Cham habitats, the temples and towers at My Son were built from an artistic viewpoint derived from religion and ancient Indian art. However, at its heyday, Cham architectural art of which the My Son sanctuary is a typical example bears an original character of its own. While the Khmer works in the Angkor period were made of sandstone, the Cham works were made only of bricks with door-frames and decorative motifs in stone. In the Cham towers, red bricks were piled in good order without joint, and yet they have stood up century after century. Outside there are stone blocks carved with images of gods and encrusted with beautiful motifs. A tower has two doors facing east and west. Almost everywhere, the front side looks to the east, the sacred direction of sunrise. The tower pillars in bricks bear very elaborate, graceful and harmonious carvings. Inside, the walls have cavities or pedestals statues. Higher up, the walls bend to form a very beautiful and balanced arch. The biggest tower at My Son is the Pagoda tower : it is 24 metres high, each side of its base is 13 metres long, it is surrounded by six smaller towers. A French archaelogist has described it as a masterpiece of Cham architecture, one of the most beautiful ancient works in Southeast Asia. The outside of the tower bears pretty leaf-like motifs, images of charming women-dancers in stone with a good-looking face, a smiling mouth, a full breast, and two hands holding a lotus flower before the breast. There are also funny stone elephants, majestic lions...



Cham Tower.

Photo : VNA

WHERE A PRINCESS TOOK A BATH

Tien Dung was the only daughter of King Hung. Legend has it that she gave up wealth and honour to marry Chu Dong Tu, a poor young man without a stitch to call his own: his only loin-cloth had been used to bury his father.

In the daytime, Chu Dong Tu was always neck-deep in the water: fishing was his only way to earn a living. Moreover, he had to hide his nudity.

One day it happened that Tien Dung took a bath on the beach, at the very spot in which Chu Dong Tu was hiding. As the sand under the tent was washed away, Tien Dung was bewildered to find at her feet a handsome young man, as naked as on the day he was born, and trembling with shame and fear. They fell in love and were allowed to marry, with the king's blessing. Later, they ascended to heaven where they lived happily ever after.

The place, called Bai Tu Nhien (Beach of Nature), is on the Red River, at Hong Chau village, west of Hanoi. A festival is held every year, in spring, in memory of the couple. A palanquin will be carried down to the beach, up to the water's edge, while on the other side of the river, where stands a temple dedicated to Tien Dung and Chu Dong Tu, an altar will be set up in the open air for worshippers from nearby villages.

On the same occasion, a boat race will be held. The eight boats, each representing a village in the area, are rowed by brawny village lads whose waists are tightly laced in bands of red or blue cloth. They race on a distance of seven kilometres, to the cheers of large crowds on the banks, while the men at the rudder chant rhythmically:

"Fold your wings!
"Spread them again!
"Fly ahead!
"All ye lads,
"Fly on!
"Take the lead!"

Me So, one of the riverine villages, is known for its part in the war against the Yuan in the 13th century. It is said that as a fleet of the Tran was passing by, hot on the heels of an enemy fleet, villagers rushed to the river to offer to the victors ropes made with homespun cloth. It was at the same village that rice was stored for the victorious army. That was why King Tran Nhan Tong called it Me So (Rice Store).

LE VAN BA

About the Cham stone statues, a French journalist has written: "What first attracts the attention is the original plasticity of Cham statuary. The statues of gods are generally made with very strong-looking blocks. Viewed in front or in profile or sideways, they reveal the artist's talent in giving his works an appearance of true life. The statues at My Son or Tra Kieu show a tendency to bring into relief blocks beside sweeping lines on the stone. How beautiful and robust they look! A superb art indeed!"

The works bequeathed by the Cham nationality at My Son and other places in Central Vietnam have embellished and diversified the cultural and artistic treasure of the Vietnamese nation.

After the reunification of the country, in furtherance of scientific research and restoration work, the new administration undertook excavations in the whole of the My Son sanctuary. The removal of mines alone exacted a heavy toll: six armymen were killed and a number of others injured. The Vietnam — Polish cultural co-operation plan provides, among other things, for the restoration of the My Son vestiges. Polish experts have made investigations and surveys, and taken photographs of the remaining towers. In the 1981 — 1985 five-year plan, timely preservation and restoration work was carried out on the towers. Polish experts headed by architect Kasimir Coatloski joined Vietnamese architects and cadres in this work.

The day is not far when the My Son vestiges, a centre of Cham architecture and sculpture will be an attractive tourist spot for visitors at home and abroad.

THANH PHUONG

THE PHILIPPINES...

(Continued from page 10)

democratization and the anti-US spirit, the future of US military bases in the Philippines must be seriously tackled with, and this is affecting the US scheme of deterrence in the whole region. The developments in the Philippines is a matter of concern for the United States. The New Constitution of the country which came into force after a recent national referendum may bring about disadvantageous consequences for it. The anti-US spirit has been strongly developing. If in 1991, the Concession Treaty will not be extended, the US will have to withdraw, thus losing an important strategic position and suffering an irretrievable defeat in its Asian-Pacific strategy. In face of this danger, Washington is trying to woo Manila while bringing pressure to bear on it by way of deterrence.

The US military actions in the Philippines over the past few days have not only had an effect on the political situation there, but have also caused tension in the Asian-Pacific region. Together with the people around the world, the people of this region are striving for the establishment of a zone of peace, stability, cooperation and friendship. Many Governments, among them that of the SRV, have been making every effort to find a way to reduce tension. Swimming against the tide, the US is doomed to failure. ●

A POTENTIALITY...

(Continued from page 11)

The touristic requirement for our people is very big. We cannot yet meet it though in 1986 there were nearly 1.5 million tourist days. In 1987, the service for Vietnamese tourists and overseas nationals on visit to the country will be expanded.

Thanks to its fine landscape, Vietnam bids fair to develop its touristic industry. Touristic programmes are being prepared, touristic services expanded and hotels re-equipped to meet the requirements of the tourists right in the summer of 1987.

BINH HOA

DA LAT -

A TOURIST TOWN

Unlike Hanoi and Hue, Da Lat (in Lam Dong province) has a European look. It took shape and developed at the beginning of the 20th century. Albeit in the tropics, it has a temperate climate as it stands 1,500 metres above sea level, a mean temperature of 18°C, and a rainfall of 1,504.8 mm/year. Even in the rainy season, the moisture of the atmosphere is very low. Morever, Da Lat has a belt of vegetables and fruits round the year.

Da Lat is also a town with hills and forests covered with green pine-trees, with many lakes: Xuan Huong, Than Tho (Whispers) Suoi Vang (Yellow Brook), Quang Trung, Da Thien... and with many cascades: Prenn, Cam Ly, Datanla, Gougal, Pongour, Uyen Uong. It is also a town of flowers — temperate and tropical — from orchid, gladiolus, carnation to rose, mimosa, cherry, immortelle and pansy. Moreover, it can boast of many luxurious and beautiful villas with various styles in harmony with the natural environment. Today the 3,500 villas in Da Lat with their original styles still keep abreast of modern architecture. This shows an apt combination between manual and brain workers to adorn nature, build and embellish their tourist town.

Thanks to its natural beauty, to favourable conditions (less than 70 km from the sea as the crow flies) and to its former material base, Da Lat has become a famous tourist centre and resort of Vietnam. Tourists have flocked to the poetic town in increasing numbers — no less than 6,000 in some days, the number may reach the million mark a year in the future.

Aware that tourism in Lam Dong is one of the strong points of the economy, a major branch bearing an industrial character, the provincial administration has duly invested for the tourist service to promote its role. For its part, the Vietnam General Department of Tourism has also helped it develop.

Together with the exploitation of its existing infrastructure, material and technical base the tourist service has pooled its efforts with other branches to tap natural beauty: lakes, cascades, valleys and beauty spots like Tuyen Lam lake, Tien lake, Cat Tien area and the Cemetery of War Martyrs... to build attractive tourist works. In the future, appropriations will be allotted to set up some areas like Dam Rong with a spring of hot water, Hon Nga with mineral water to cure diseases, Duc Trong with a centre to rear milch cows, Phi Vang and Cat Tien with primeval forests, heroic villages in Di Linh, Bao Loc... into impressive tourist centres.

To serve the tourists in Da Lat — Lam Dong, besides the existing 10 villas and 9 hotels like the Palace, Da Lat, Duy Tan, Lam Son, Ngoc Lan... and the restaurants and refreshment bars like Thuy Ta, Thanh Thuy, Xuan Huong, Duc Trong, Bao Loc... there will be more villas and hotels in use. In Da Lat most hotels have modern facilities. The Palace, Da Lat and Duy Tan hotels can accommodate foreign guests. Regarding communication means, apart from cars, the province boasts of rudimentary and yet elegant means like elephant and horse-carriage. As for entertainments, there are movie-houses, video-cassette, and attractive artistic soirées. Mention has also to be made of their delicacies.

At present, to meet the tourists increasing requirements, a plan has been drawn up to develop tourist services: photo studio, tailor's shop, beauty parlour and other stores at Duc Trong. In the near future, Quang Trung lake will be provided with tourist facilities and recreation services on the lake complete with meals and refreshments.

LE DAM

Than Tho Lake in Da Lat.

Photo: MINH LOC

ELEPHANTS IN TAY NGUYEN

Ban Don — in Krong Ana village, Ea Sup district, northwest of Dac Lac province in Tay Nguyen (the Central Highlands) — is a well-known beauty spot. Most attractive are the elephants found there in great numbers, hence the name of "Capital of Elephants" given to the area. That is the reason why Ban Don will be built into a tourist centre in the near future. The "Capital of Elephants" also has a rich folk culture. The tourist will have a taste of "jar-alcohol", drinking with thin and long bamboo pipes, he will attend performances of traditional art by highlanders accompanied with gongs, drums and dances around camp fires. He will have a look at a park of wild birds and beasts across the Srepok river, at dancing peacocks, at big iguanas useful to paleontologists, at buffalo herds in their strolls, and particularly at elephant herds which are like walking mountains.

From time immemorial, Ban Don has had many wild elephants, and their hunting is an old trade still in honour. The tourist can have an interesting chat with outstanding elephant hunters who are called masters of elephants and commanders of elephant hunters.

One of them is Y Pui Nie, from the Mnong nationality, who recently died at the age of 124 after catching 300 elephants, and who gave up hunting only one year before his death. The hunters have to be clever and courageous in directing tame elephants to approach wild ones, in using his tools like nooses made of buffalo hide, thorny iron sticks to spur the beasts... They have to abide by many rituals which, apart from their superstitious aspect, regard the elephant as a cute and sturdy animal. It is a belief among the highlanders that should anyone do a wrong thing, say adultery, then ride an elephant, the beast would throw him down. If the hunter fights with somebody before the hunting, the tame elephant will also fight with the wild elephant and the hunt will fail. Many stories are told about the intelligence and loyalty of elephants. They can understand man's voice, play with children, share their masters' joy and sorrow. In this "Capital of Elephants" most of the households have at least one elephant used as a "heavy-duty truck" for the family or the village...

In 1985, on the 10th anniversary of the liberation of Buon Ma Thuot, a pack of 30 elephants took part in the military parade. The beasts advanced in order, turned right, turned left and knelt down at the command of mahouts sitting in their multicoloured canvas howdahs. After the military parade came an elephant-race in Buon Ma Thuot sports-ground. At an order, the beasts rushed forward and, despite their weighty mass, darted like arrows with stones flying and earth rumbling under their feet.

The image of the martial parade with many elephants was photographed by quite a few journalists and tourists.

In the near future, the tourist service in Dac Lac and other provinces in the Central Highlands will use this primitive and huge beast to carry guests visiting the area.

TRAN LE VAN

Old Y Pui Nie, 124 years old (in the middle), captured 300 elephants for taming.
Photo: VAN THANH

Illustration by CONG QUOC HA

HOA BINH JAR-ALCOHOL

The Muong nationality in Hoa Binh province used to make and drink jar-alcohol — a very longstanding custom which has been handed down to the present time. The alcohol is drunk through thin and long bamboo pipes.

Jar-alcohol is drunk at wedding parties, rejoicings, festivals and New Year celebrations. It creates a particular atmosphere which partakes of ritual character, respect-showing and warm hospitality.

On such occasions people brush aside all everyday cares to share a common joy. Even for an attending stranger, each participant is a brother or sister, a friend enjoying together the sweet flavour of the alcohol which makes you inebriated. People avail themselves of these opportunities to exchange greetings, wishes and sing alternate folk-songs.

Village elders or distinguished guests are usually asked to drink first. Don't worry if you are invited to do so. When the master of ceremony directs the pipes toward you, take it and say:

Today is a propitious day
I call at the hamlet, at the village
I am glad that it has taken a new look
I rejoice that everybody is in good health
Now that the elders invite me to jar-alcohol
I'll drink first with your permission.

Your words will be met with a hurrah of agreement. Then you may take the pipe with your right hand, rest your left hand on your knee and concentrate your eyes upon the alcohol-jar. The master of ceremony fills it with several hornfuls of boiled water. Should the attendants decide to drink two "buffalo-horns" of alcohol, everybody has to follow suit. Should you hesitate or seek ways to avoid it, you will be immediately "punished" and compelled to drink one or two extra "buffalo-horns" of alcohol at the will of the attendants.

After that, people take turns to drink, bout after bout. When the alcohol is diluted, another jar will be brought in as the party lasts far into the night — the practice being to prepare lots of alcohol before rejoicings and festivals.

If you have an occasion to visit Ha Son Binh province, you can not only rest in pretty houses-on-stilts but also have local meals prepared by consummate cooks and drink jar-alcohol.

Indeed, the making of jar-alcohol has been improved with an eye to ensuring high quality and hygienic preparation — thus winning the appreciation of tourists at home and abroad.

BUI THIEN VAN

A FLAVOUR OF AUTUMN

A foreigner invited to enjoy the Mid-Autumn Festival (the 15th day of the eighth lunar month) in a Vietnamese family will remember for a long time the richness of tropical fruits, and particularly, the wonderful flavour of custard-apples.

On the moon-lit night of the Mid-Autumn Festival, the tray of fruits and cakes is truly attractive. Beside fragrant pastries and glutinous rice cakes, there are fruits galore: yellow grapefruit, red persimmons, ripe bananas... and lying modestly among them is the custard-apple, round like a heart with a rugged peel, which enhances the harmony of colour.

Illustration by CONG QUOC HA

A custard-apple releases a delicate odour. Once peeled, it reveals a white pulp made of many small sections, each of which contains a jet-black seed.

There are two kinds of custard-apples: tender and tough. A good tender one should have a hard peel while a good tough one should have a soft peel. Both are fragrant but the tough kind is preferred for its fleshy sections, rich taste, few seeds, and perfumed odour.

The custard-apple is planted everywhere in the Vietnamese countryside. When the soil is elevated, fresh and permeable, it gives bigger and better fruit. This tree difficult to plant usually bears fruit only after 7-8 years, hence the saying, "Young people should plant custard-apples, and old people, banana."

The ripening season is very short. Early in Autumn, when the north wind blows and the sun sheds its yellow rays, one can see light-green custard-apples brought to town by women-sellers from the countryside.

The custard-apple is not only delicious but also of a high nutritive value. According to scientific research, it contains 1.6% protein, 14.5% glucids, and each 100g of it supplies 66 calories. That is why it is often bought as gift to ailing old people or sick children. In addition, it has certain medicinal properties: its leaves is used to cure malaria, and its seeds, sinusitis and dermatoses.

Custard-apples are found only in some tropical countries. As there are not many custard-apples in Vietnam, their export is insignificant. Therefore, a foreign visitor is lucky if he can relish the flavour of this fruit when he happens to be in Vietnam during its ripening season.

BICH HOP

DELICIOUS FOODS – A REQUIREMENT OF TOURISM

A trip without tasting some delicious dishes would deprive the tourist of his pleasure. In Vietnam, delicious traditional dishes particular to each hotel are served to visitors.

Compared with those of other countries, Vietnamese cuisine has its own pecularities. The foods are delicate as they are well seasoned with nuoc mam (fish brine), and most of them are served hot. An ordinary meal has not much meat and fat like in some other countries. Vietnam has plenty of vegetables and fruits all the year round. They are served with various dishes, thus facilitating digestion.

Vietnam tourism holds regular competitions for hotels and restaurants in cooking traditional foods: *nem ran* (fried pork coated with rice wafers), or *hap la gung* (stewed snail wrapped in ginger leaves), *bo cau nhoi yen* (salangane-nest-stuffed-pigeon) and various dishes prepared from eel, beef and other meats.

Of late Huong Giang hotel in Hue was awarded a gold medal for its rice and mussel dish which formerly was a cheap food served to the poor by itinerant vendors right on the street pavements. The cooks working at Huong Giang hotel have raised the value of this dish and included it on its menu for tourists. At Huong Giang this dish is prepared with rice and 15 ordinary ingredients and seasonings: mussel, groundnut, sesame, shrimp paste, carambola, fried onion, hot pepper sauce... so that it tastes sweet, savoury, sour, salted, acrid, bitter and hot at the same time.

Vietnamese culinary art is highly appreciated by the tourists. Many of the delicacies are highly appreciated.

HOAI LAN

GROUND PORK AND SEA CRAB

1. *Ingredients* (for ten servings)

— Sea crab	1.5 kg
— Pounded pork fillet	0.3 kg
— Vermicelli	0.03 kg
— Dry onion	0.01 kg
— Mushroom	0.01 kg
— Glutamate	0.01 kg
— Pepper	0.01 kg
— Fresh onion	0.02 kg
— Aromatic herb	0.01 kg
— Fish brine	2 teaspoonfuls
— Arrow root starch	0.03 kg
— Tangerine peel	0.01 kg

2. *Preparation*

— Boil crabs, take out the flesh while keeping shells, legs and pincers in their former shape.

— Put vermicelli in water, and cut it short.

— Chop mushroom, dry onion and tangerine peel.

— Mix these ingredients with pounded pork, add pepper, salt, fish brine.

— Soak the crab shell in fat, fill it with the above mixture.

— Put back legs and pincers in their places, stew the preparation for 30 minutes. Then take off the juice to prepare a sauce with arrow root starch.

— As decoration put the biggest crab in the middle of the plate and smaller ones around it.

The food should be sprinkled with sauce together with aromatic herbs, onion, vermicelli, mushroom, and served hot.

3. *Criteria*

— Dish well ornamented

— It should be sweet and sticky

— The sauce should be savoury and relatively thick.

(Continued on page 22)

BASIC GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS IN VIETNAM

Prof. NGUYEN MANH DUC

Director of the Geophysical Research Centre

In recent years, the Vietnamese geophysical service has conducted several basic surveys to meet the urgent needs of the national economy. It has, for instance, determined the seismic zones of the headwater forests in the Tri An hydro-electric power plant area, the Quy Hop tin mine area and the Nui Dinh industrial centre, investigated the Nhom Hill area, studied an anti-lightning system for the Tam Dao transmission station, etc. The surveys conducted by the geophysical service have also helped many branches of science in the basic study and application of new scientific and technological achievements of the world to the conditions of Vietnam. The data it has collected so far about the earth crust on Vietnam's territory have been very useful for the prospection of subsoil resources, the study of the biophysiology and ecology of food and industrial crops, the exploitation of solar energy and the study of the climatic regime, etc.

The Path Already Travelled

The Vietnamese geophysical service was founded 29 years ago. Having early realized the importance of basic geophysical surveys, it immediately concentrated its efforts along this line instead of on more topical subjects in the world. As early as the sixties, programmes for basic surveys of the country were already worked out, such as to determine the seismic zones in service of capital construction, to study the physical aspects of storm lightning in service of the protection of the electric grid. In the late seventies, the orientation for geophysical basic surveys became more clearly defined. In the early eighties, the Geophysical Research Centre was founded at the Vietnam Institute of Science with still more clearly defined objectives. About that time, geophysicists took part in many major construction projects from North to South, and made the effect of their work felt ever more tangibly in spite of still poor material and technical equipment. The downgrading of seismic risks at the headwater forests of the Tri An hydro-electric power plant and the Da Nang thermo-power plant is the result of many microseismic surveys. The in-depth study of the structure of the earth crust is being used in the exploration of mineral resources and other branches of science. Likewise, data about photosynthetic radiation have begun to be supplied by the atmospheric radiation research department to various branches of science and technology. These are very valuable basic survey documents.

Recently, the Council of Ministers has issued a decision on basic surveys. This marks a new turning point, affirming both the urgency and the strategic importance of basic surveys in the exploitation of natural resources and in the protection of the environment. Basic geophysical surveys are aimed primarily at getting a comprehensive and profound knowledge of nature in our country from the deep origins of the phenomena, hence finding accurate answers and effective methods to cope with them. Obviously, this requires time and no small investments.

First, it is the investment in the network of geophysical stations established in different parts of the country. At these stations basic data are collected over sufficiently long periods to provide valuable documents for the study of the laws of nature. These data must be abundant and of high quality, reliable enough for purposes of analysis and explanation and eventually the finding of optimum solutions to the plans of exploiting and protecting natural resources as well as for the application of the achievements of modern science and technologies in the conditions of Vietnam. Second, it is the investment in the training of a contingent of scientists strong enough to accomplish various projects of basic surveys at a high level, endowed with a high professional qualification in the processing of data, and first-rate scientists capable of setting the orientation for research work in the light of the future needs of the country.

As things stand now, we have still too few geophysical stations, and many geophysical elements have not yet come within the range of our research. At present, we have only six seismographic stations while our country needs about twenty. We have as yet no seismic forecasting station. We need many stations to record the atmospheric and solar radiation elements. Yet, so far, we have no radiation recording station in the proper sense of the word. We have not been able to record such elements as atmospheric ozone, or to study the atmospheric structure and perturbations... Highly qualified science workers are very few and still operate scatteringly. Neither do we have a comprehensive programme of training cadres from observers to research workers for all the necessary departments. Even though our country remains one of small-scale production, we should make the necessary preparations to meet in time the needs of a large-scale production.

International Cooperation

International cooperation is a basic attribute of the geophysical branch. Problems within the territorial boundaries of a country can find satisfactory solutions only on the basis of an overall understanding of our planet. Inversely, not a few interesting questions of our planet can be observed right in the territory of a single country. The geophysical branch of Vietnam has established long-term relations with its counterparts in the fraternal socialist countries like Poland, the Soviet Union ...Right from its founding, it has closely cooperated with its Polish counterpart in the International Geophysical Year of 1957 — 58. Soviet scientists have made active contri-

butions to the first seismic zoning maps and geo-magnetic maps of our country.

Of no less importance is our geophysical cooperation with other countries in the region since Vietnam is a narrow country stretching on several degrees of latitude. Our cooperation with Laos, Kampuchea and other Southeast Asian countries will help us better understand many problems related to our territory.

Prospects

Much remains to be done in the domain of geophysics, especially since our country is a focal point of many geophysical phenomena of interest.

The geophysicists of our country have convincingly demonstrated that Vietnam is far from being free of earthquakes. Moreover, the frequency of seismic tremors has a tendency to increase in recent years. Vietnam's geo-magnetic field has some peculiarities of a near equatorial region. World scientists are paying particular attention to the magnetic anomalies in the southern part of our country emanating from the magnetic-electronic rings in the ionosphere. The phenomena of very heavy rainstorms in the conditions of our country's humid and hot climate also bear a very original character. For instance, within a short period of time, in the Tam Dao mountain area, thunderstorms of kinds rarely seen in the world have been observed, some even for the first time, although thunderstorms have been the object of study of world scientists for centuries now. In a word, our country is a focal point of important geophysical phenomena not adequately studied. The scope of activity of our geophysical branch on land and in the territorial waters remains very large, and promises vigorous development in the years to come. This offers great prospects for our cooperation with geophysicists in all countries who will be welcomed into joint projects to carry out basic surveys of planetary significance which would also create more favourable conditions for basic surveys on the land and in the territorial waters of our country.

This requires that the Vietnamese geophysical branch and others engaged in basic surveys work out appropriate development programs in order to meet the immediate and future needs of the country. ●

THE VIETNAMESE COASTAL AREAS, TERRITORIAL WATERS AND THEIR ECONOMY

NGO DUC HOAN

Nature has endowed Vietnam with vast and valuable territorial waters. Extending on 3,260 kilometres over 13 degrees of latitude, the Vietnamese coasts border nearly half the mainland territory of Vietnam from Mong Cai (Quang Ninh province) in the north to Ha Tien (Kien Giang province) in the south. Vietnam's exclusive economic zone covers one million square kilometres of sea surface or three times our land territory. Combined with the mainland territory, the territorial waters are of paramount importance for the country's socio-economic development and defence.

Lying in the tropics, the Vietnamese territorial waters are rich in natural products and are one of the 40 or so important bodies of salt water in the world. They have fishing reserves of over 3 million tonnes, of which over one million tonnes may be caught each year. Totalling hundreds of thousands of hectares, our river mouths, lagoons, bays lend themselves to the rearing of fish, shrimps, tortoises, pearl oysters and also edible seaweeds. So far 1.57 million hectares of coastal land have been exploited while another 600,000 hectares can be gradually put to use. Filao pines covering hundreds of thousands of hectares are good protection against strong winds and sand invasion, while about 400,000 hectares of mangroves and caju-puts supply timber and firewood to the local populations. Grown on 20,000 hectares, which could later expand to 50,000 hectares, rush is used in the making of matting and packing materials. Of the 20,000 hectares of salt marshes which can give every year one million tonnes of salt, only 10,000 hectares are being exploited, yielding 600,000—700,000 tonnes. From salt we can extract gypsum, magnesium, chromium, iodine...

The products of local fishery, forestry, agriculture and handicrafts help meet the needs of the population in food and raw materials, and are also exported: shrimps and lobsters, cuttlefish, sea-swallows' nests, tortoise shells, crocodile skins, salt, red coral, coconuts, cajuput, rush, millet, red and black pepper, honey, sugar, alcohol, and also live animals. The value of our yearly exports of certain products (shrimps, cuttlefish) is equal to one milion tonnes of fish, while being caught at less cost.

Our off-shore islands (not including Hoang Sa and Truong Sa) numbering 3,000 and totalling 3,500 hectares in area have great economic and defence value. The billions of cubic metres of alluvium carried by our rivers to the sea (chiefly in the Red River and Mekong deltas) have made it possible for the mainland to gain several hundred metres on the sea

CHICKEN PIE

(Continued from page 20)

1. *Ingredients*

Chicken	1.4	kilograms	Saltpetre	0.5	kg
Alcohol		two glasses	Salt	0.01	kg
Chicken liver	0.2	kg	Pepper	0.005	kg
Pork	0.5	kg	Mushroom	0.05	kg
Salted meat	0.5	kg	Pickled cucumber	0.3	kg
			Fat	0.3	kg

Shark's fin, an export item of high economic value.

Photo: CONG DOAN

every year. Sea dykes have been built to protect these new tracts of coastal land. The sand extracted on the coast and around off-shore islands is used in glass-making. Coral is used for the production of high-grade lime and certain pharmaceutical substances. Resources in oil and gas and such ores as copper, cobalt, manganese, sulphur, lead, tin, are being explored.

Besides the major ports, river mouths (more than one hundred in number) play an important role in transport and communications between various regions in the country and with foreign countries. Vietnam has many excellent seaside resorts: Tra Co, Do Son, Sam Son, Nha Trang, Vung Tau...

The coastal region has a population of about 3 million (1.4 million of working age) living in 400 communes right on the coast. The 100 coastal districts have a population of 13 million (6 million of working age). The abundant work force thus accounts for about 50% of total population. However, the means of production (boats, fishing gear...) are lacking. Besides, the economic structure, organisation of production and exploitation of resources are still deficient. Of the 250,000 fishermen, 30,000 are not fully employed. The people's political and cultural standards and their living conditions are uneven. In the South, where the economy comprises five components (state, collective, joint state-private, private, and capitalist sectors), the socialist transformation of agriculture has not yet been completed and the socialist relations of production not yet consolidated. Economic management meets with difficulty: technical and managerial cadres are lacking and not yet rationally employed.

The Vietnamese coastline is dotted with river mouths, coves and lagoons. In some regions steep rocky mountains advance to the edge of the sea. There the water is deep and large ships can come close to the coast. In other areas, large beaches lend themselves to the landing of troops. In our history, many foreign invasions came from the sea. From the coast, the enemy could penetrate far inland along rivers. That is why, our coastal region assumes a most important strategic role in national defence.

To sum up, due to those physical, economic and social features, our coastal and sea areas play a role of paramount significance in national economy and defence.

After the reunification of the country in 1976, three conferences on the sea were held in 1977, 1981 and 1985, at which views were exchanged on potential resources, survey and study, and a programme for socio-economic development.

On 12 May 1977, the Vietnamese Government issued a formal statement on Vietnamese territorial waters, exclusive economic zone and continental shelf.

These were basic steps toward a strategy of socio-economic development as well as national defence.

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2. *Preparation*

— Remove the bones of the chicken. Slice the filleted meat 0.05 metre long, mix it with salt, pepper, and alcohol.

— Mince pork, spray it with pepper, salt, saltpetre, and alcohol.

— Slice chicken liver, salted meat, sausage, mushroom.

Wrap the stuffed chicken with fat and roll it tightly in a linen, fasten it with a string and boil it for one hour.

— Press the pie to extract water, put it in a fridge. Slice the pie and serve it with vegetables and pickled cucumber.

3. *Decoration*

— Cover the bottom of the plate with vegetables and sliced cucumber, onion, carrot and put the pie on top.

4. *Criteria*

The pie should be finely sliced, the vegetables and ingredients should keep their natural colours.

Seasoning should be moderate, the pie should be firm and sticky, the chicken should keep its delicious smell.

GETTING RICH WITH PROFITS FROM GARDENS

In spring, the gardens of Dang Hai commune are bright with flowers: peony, gerbera, lily... and pervaded with a mild fragrance. In the commune, we can also see big gardens of ripe jujube surrounding newly-built two-storied houses.

Dang Hai is famous for its flowers. While at Ngoc Ha and Nhat Tan (Hanoi), flower gardens are shrinking to leave room for dwelling houses, Dang Hai has plenty of land (1,500 — 2,500 square metres for each household) to grow flowers.

The commune appeared on the map of Haiphong over a century ago when the first settlers came to clear land and build their houses. Seventeen generations have succeeded one another, but nobody at Dang Hai knows when flowers were first grown there. Now the flowers planted on 50 hectares have yielded a substantial amount of foreign exchange: Dang Hai flowers are exported to Vladivostok (Soviet Union), Hongkong and the Philippines. On the home market, besides Haiphong, that commune is supplying flowers to Ha Nam Ninh, Hai Hung, Thai Binh, and even Hanoi.

In Dang Hai, flowers are grown all the year round on an area almost equal to the area planted to rice which is grown in two crops.

Thanks to the profit earned from flowers, 85 — 90% of collective peasant households have brick houses (including two-storied ones). Not a few families are getting 40,000 — 50,000 *dong* a year as profits. Mrs Thanh's garden is really a park. Surrounded by flowers, her dwelling house is roomy and well furnished: T.V. set, refrigerator, cassette radio, electric fans and other furnitures. With her 1,500 square-metre garden tended by three farm hands, Mrs Thanh is busy all day long. Opposite her garden is Mr Do's, a 2,500 square-metre-garden grown to jujubes. It can be said that Dang Hai lives on flowers and jujubes.

Of the 19.2 million *dongs* earned by the Dang Hai peasants in 1984, 9 million came from family farming. In 1985, 120 hectares were turned into gardens of flowers and vegetables for export; and the profit derived from family economy more than doubled. Dang Hai has begun to employ experts for the tending of dwarf trees and the breeding of ornamental birds to gain more profits. The peasants' living conditions have been much improved. The commune has now a 800-seat meeting hall and a basic general-education school with 28 classes, in which 1,500 children are studying without defraying any expense for school things.

CANH DUONG

NEW LIFE IN A H'MONG COMMUNE

Can Ho, a commune of the H'mong minority in Bac Ha district, Hoang Lien Son province, near the Chinese border, comprises 140 households with 750 members. It has an agricultural cooperative, a crèch, a kindergarten, a basic general-education school, a medical station and a maternity home. The people are encouraged by the new regime to give up backward habits and customs. They are proud to see their folksongs and folkdances collected by musicologists and performed on the stage. When hearing the H'mong flute played on the national or provincial radio, they know that their traditional culture is being kept alive. They follow Party guidance as they advance to socialism together with other ethnic minorities, and are doing their best to catch up with the delta people.

Giang Sao Cau, secretary of the Party communal committee, told me of some backward customs which have been got rid of: first, the Leng San festival formerly held at the beginning of the year. To celebrate it, all the villagers, rich or poor, had to pool money to sacrifice a buffalo or a pig and make rice offerings to the "God of the Forest" in the hope of getting his protection for themselves and their crops. After the ceremony, people would refrain from going to the fields for several days. At present, the people will greet spring in another way: they plant saplings and review their production work.

Formerly the H'mong believed that disease was caused by evil spirits. To cure illnesses they would call in sorcerers to perform complicated rituals which might last several days and involve sacrifices of fowls and pigs. The communal authorities tried to persuade people who fell ill to go to the medical station for treatment. However, medicines were scarce and not all diseases could be successfully treated. Witch doctors took advantage of the situation to propagandize for magic. But the Party and administrative committee resolutely fought back. Once Giang Sao Peo's three children fell ill with dysentery. He invited witch doctors to his house to try to cure them by means of magic. As a result, one of the children died. To save the other two, the Party secretary himself went to the district hospital and brought back the necessary medicines to treat them. Their lives were saved. The villagers again felt confidence in modern medical treatment. Eventually all witch doctors gave up their trade and joined the local agricultural cooperative. Some of them have become members of the commune's theatrical troupe. They teach young people to play the *khen* panpipes and to perform traditional ritual dances. The troupe some time ago won two gold medals at a national artistic festival.

Giang Sao Cau went on: "Formerly, we used to organize elaborate funerals for the dead. When a man died, each of his sons would sacrifice a buffalo to his soul. In one instance, as many as five buffaloes were to be slaughtered by the five sons. Finally however only an old buffalo was killed, due to the advice of the communal authorities.

A popular meeting was later held to work out simplified rituals for weddings and funerals. Today, when a person died, his body is buried within 48 hours. His burial is entirely done by the cooperative, without copious meals and without complicated ceremonies."

TRAN HUU SON

A FOREST DISTRICT MAKES HEADWAY

VUONG DUA

Foodgrain Production, a Task of Prime Importance

Loc Ninh is not a small district with a dense population. However, it has little arable land, only 10,000 ha, out of a total area of 120,000 ha. Traditionally, the population here practised slash-and-burn farming, thus depending entirely on nature. Total cultivated area never exceeded 6,000 ha. As yearly rice yields averaged only 10-12 metric quintals per ha, the district was not able to feed its population of 60,000.

The soil in Loc Ninh is basaltic and the terrain is uneven. Hemmed in by rolling hills, fields would lie fallow for years. In the burnt-out clearings, hill rice was grown. Few people grew wet rice. After taking stock of the situation — the difficulties presented by the terrain and the importance for the district of food crops — the district leadership decided to put the fallow fields under crops and lay foundations for intensive farming.

They started by promoting small-scale water conservancy, e.g. by building dams to irrigate the area under wet rice. The district authorities and the grassroots combined their efforts to build about ten projects. In Loc Hung commune alone, the peasants built five irrigation projects, thereby expanding the cultivated area from 20 ha to 400 ha. In the same way, Loc Khanh, Hung Phuoc and Loc Thanh communes put another 100 ha of land under wet rice. Besides, in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities used to nomadic life and slash-and-burn farming, the district authorities helped the population stabilize their living conditions and reclaim hundreds of hectares of land, which has lain fallow.

After five years of sustained efforts, from 1978 to 1983, Loc Ninh managed to increase the area under wet rice from 1,500 ha to 2,200 ha. This led to a major change in the structure of crops. Two areas of food production came into existence: that of hill rice and that of wet rice. Wet rice accounted for 20-30% of the output of foodgrain. But what is more important, slash-and-burn farming was reduced by 40% — 50%.

Increasing the cultivated area has not been the only concern of Loc Ninh district. Following the proportion of wet rice growing, the leadership encouraged the localities to apply various technical measures and practise intensive farming: use of green compost and manure, selection of seeds, better-timed sowing and transplanting... The yield of wet rice has been raised from 2 to 2.5 tonnes per ha. The area of burnt-out clearings has been restricted and the structure of food crops has been changed: in area where rice-yields were too low, rice has been replaced by subsidiary food crops, mainly manioc and maize, and also leguminous plants. Thus the cultivation of rice has been combined with that of subsidiary food and industrial crops.

The cultivated area increased from 5,500 ha in 1978 to 9,000 ha in 1984. The output of food grain was 10,000 tonnes by 1983, a two-fold increase over 1976, and subsidiary food crops accounted for 30% of the crop structure. In the main Loc Ninh is now self-sufficient in food. The average per capita annual output is 300 kilos, a twofold increase over 1976. In 1978 the district delivered 1,500 tonnes of paddy to the State. By 1983 the figure had increased to 4,800 tonnes.

Turning to Good Account the Fortes of Forest Areas

Forestland in the district occupies about 60,000 ha, 50% of total natural land. The war and also the practice of slash-and-burn farming played havoc with forests. However, what remains of them, if well cared for, will soon yield returns. Forest soil is fertile, suited for the cultivation of both fast-growth and perennial industrial crops. For purposes of economic development, the authorities in Loc Ninh regard forest potentialities as ranking next in importance to agricultural production. In their eyes, forestry is the road to prosperity after enough food has been produced. Immediately after liberation, they took steps to protect forest resources and restricted the wanton exploitation of timber, which had led to the erosion of agricultural land. They helped nomadic people settle down and encouraged them to grow both wet rice, and hill rice on abandoned clearings. Eight years after liberation, 90% of the nomadic population had settled down, and hundreds

of hectares of forestland had been saved from destruction. In the following years, after the new relations of production had been established, the district authorities have entrusted local cooperatives with controlling the exploitation of forest products. Logging is strictly forbidden in reforested areas, and people are allowed to exploit only such forest products as will be used in building and in processing industries and will supply additional income to collective enterprises. At present Loc Ninh has started entrusting forestland to the management of families of co-op members.

Loc Ninh has also increased the areas under coffee, pepper, and fast-growth industrial crops. Owing to the still insufficient development of the collective economy and the low level of social division of labour, the district authorities have decided to introduce the cultivation of coffee and pepper into the family economy, with the collective sector growing fast-growth industrial crops in intercalation with rice and subsidiary food crops. The quotas for delivery of agricultural products to the State are fixed at the grassroots. Owing to correct procurement policies and adequate prices regarding agricultural products, each year has seen the area under leguminous plants increase by 1,000 ha, and that under coffee and pepper by 2,000 ha. In 1984 alone the district was able to deliver to the State nearly 300 tonnes of beans and over 100 tonnes of pepper...

In view of the increased area under wet rice, more draught power is needed. There are still too few tractors and besides, the uneven terrain is not favourable to mechanization. And so Loc Ninh has given a strong impetus to cattle breeding, by making full use of the nearly 1,000 ha of scattered patches of grassland. The main orientation is to develop livestock breeding in cooperatives, first of all brood animals. Breeders are given strong encouragement. In all cooperatives, 60% of the prices fetched by calves are reserved for breeders. The system for reckoning work days and work points has been improved. Many cooperatives now raise 40 — 50 head of cattle each, of which 15 — 20 are brood animals. In 1984 the herds of cattle (cows, oxen and buffaloes) numbered over 6,000 head.

A dozen years have elapsed since South Vietnam was completely liberated. By following a correct guideline, Loc Ninh has managed to build a solid economic structure and has become one of the prosperous districts in Song Be province. So far, 45 cooperatives and 9 production collectives have been set up, accounting for 90% of the peasant households and the cultivated area. Nearly 1,000 cadres now work in cooperatives and production collectives. They receive refresher training every year in order to upgrade their managerial and professional skills. ●

THE THAI MINORITY AND THE SWALLOW-TAIL BOAT ON THE DA RIVER

DUC TUAN

In our country, the Thai live mostly along the Da, a tumultuous river having an original beauty and full of lyricism. Let's listen to a Thai folk song:

"One hundred rivers empty to the Eastern Sea,
Only the Da River flows in the northern direction,
One hundred waterfalls are disposed like spinning wheels,
And looms to weave cloth of variegated colours".

Flowing in Vietnam on 535 km, the Da River has over 200 waterfalls; called "Nam Te" by the Thai people, it has its water swirl in a "coffin of rock". As on many sections, it flows between two steep walls of rocks, it is bathed in the sun only at noon, and the French call it "Black River".

There are no rivers which have no boats.
So the Da River has swallow-tail boats, strong and beautiful ones.

Swallow-tail boats are of two kinds: one cut in a hollowed tree trunk (*doc moc*, pirogue), and another made of three wooden boards (*tam ban* or sampan). The pirogue is used for travel and fishing. Its width does not exceed one metre. The stern may be curled up and provided with a hole through which passes a piece of wood, or there may be a separate "swallow tail" added to the rear of the boat. Though long, this boat has only a rower sitting at the bow; at the rear, there is a rudder allowing the boatman to steer in any direction he likes.

On the Da River, there is another very common kind of swallow-tail boat made of three wooden boards (sampan); big, having a roof, it is used to transport goods. The bigger ones, 10 — 15 metres long and 1.5 metre wide are used to carry 2 — 3 tonnes of goods. The smaller ones, 5 — 8 metres long and 1 metre wide, used to carry 0.2 — 0.3 tonnes are made of two tree trunks, one forming the body of the boat, the other strengthening its sides. The roof is covered with white *rong* (a kind of forest plant) leaves, and the floor made of flattened bamboo.

Whether it is a pirogue or a sampan, a swallow-tail boat should be light, slender, but solid and strong and easy to steer.

Why is the boat shaped like a swallow tail? There are many answers: to have place to hang a coop containing a cock, "the alarm-clock" of the boatman on the Da river, to manifest the aspiration to

(Continued on page 29)

VIETNAM'S ANCIENT ARTS

Ancient arts of Vietnam have aroused the interest of many Vietnamese and foreign scholars. Thousands of architectural vestiges and artistic relics scattered throughout the country have been the object of intense research by ancient arts scholars. History books or literary writings dating from the 10th to the 19th centuries under the Ly, Tran, Le and Nguyen dynasties have referred to them, but never have they been studied as a separate art.

It can be said that serious studies of ancient Vietnamese arts began only after the conquest of Vietnam by the French in the late 19th century. After the basic completion of their "pacification campaign" and the founding of the so-called cultural and educational institutions headed by the French in Hanoi and Saigon, many French scholars began investigation into the ancient art works of Vietnam. Such research works had run into the hundreds by the time the French colonialists were completely driven out of Vietnam.

Professional pursuit apart, the French scholars naturally had their own design in the study of our cultural relics — to help consolidate the colonial rule, an aspect which we shall not discuss in this article. In any case, even with their inevitable defects and shortcomings, it would be unfair not to acknowledge that these studies of the colonial period had laid the first bricks in the study of the ancient arts of Vietnam as well as in the formation of the historical science of Vietnamese arts.

The study of ancient arts of Vietnam was officially made part of the State programme as early as in the 60's following the victorious resistance war of the Vietnamese people against the French colonialists, when North Vietnam had managed to lay initial bases for economic reconstruction.

The establishment of the Arts and Crafts Institute (later changed into Arts Research Institute) made it possible to rally a number of young researchers, and laid the foundation for the systematic training of researchers into ancient arts and the building of the Vietnam Arts Museum.

The first merit of the Institute was the creation of a firm documentary base for the study of ancient arts. In coordination with the Archaeology Institute and the Service for the Preservation of Ancient Cultural Relics, Vietnamese art researchers undertook a systematic investigation into, and classification of, all ancient relics from the 17th parallel northward (up to the liberation of South Vietnam in 1975). Within only five years, the Institute collected thousands of documents about traditional arts in the form of paintings or copies of paintings, pictures, replicas and also original artifacts. Many of these collections were later on displayed at the Arts Museum, for instance, Vietnamese Folk Paintings (1968), Ancient Vietnamese Engravings (1972), Ancient Vietnamese Ceramics (1976), and Ethnic Minorities' Arts (1977).

The investigation into, and confirmation of the architectural vestiges already mentioned in ancient documents and the discovery of new relics helped to determine the exact dates of many architectures. For instance, the Tay Phuong pagoda, one of the best known art works, was not built under the reign of Vinh Huu (1735 — 1740) as had been presumed earlier but at the time of the Tay Son uprising, more precisely in 1794. In particular, the communal house, a dominant trait in the Vietnamese rural life, has been proved to have appeared at the beginning of the 16th century at the earliest. Through the dating of ancient architectures, Vietnamese art researchers have been able to find out the dominant trait of the artistic style of each period as shown in the decorative motifs, on the statues and on wooden or stone engravings. Inversely, the knowledge about the general artistic style of specific periods has made it possible to ascertain the exact

dates of a number of architectures in a more scientific way.

But our researchers have not stopped there. A more demanding task is to determine the artistic value of the relics, which have also to be studied in the context of the contemporary social and human interrelations. In other words, the relics are to be placed in the context of the milieu where they were created, so as to discover the specific laws and the essence of Vietnamese arts.

Our art researchers have been assisted in this work by many concerned branches. While in the first years they relied mainly on the simple method of archaeology, today they are adopting more and more elaborate means and methods of archaeology, ethnography, sociology, historical science and other sciences such as architecture, painting, sculpture...

In that sence, we have re-studied the Dong Son art of the Bronze Age dating two thousand years back, about which many scholars have written.

Through the decorative designs on the famous bronze drums, we have detected the influence of the animal art and the squarefigure decorative motif very familiar among the nomadic tribes juxtaposing the stripe or frill decorative motifs usually found among the farming population, the masters of the Dong Son civilisation. Thus, it can be surmised that the stoppe art was introduced to Vietnam through the migration of the Tang Mien tribes, ancestors of the Lolo ethnic group now living in the northern mountain areas of Vietnam. This hypothesis has been considerably strengthened by the ancient history books of China, especially regarding the "invasion" by the Nam Chieu, a minority tribe in Yunnan, against the Red River basin in the eighth century. These books referred to the feats of arms of a general-cum-magician named Kao Piang who was sent by the Chinese emperor to put down the Nam Chieu rebellion. As can be inferred from many passages, there might have been an alliance between the Vietnamese and the Nam Chieu to resist the Chinese domination. In fact, after defeating the Nam Chieu, Kao Piang ordered the destruction of a number of Vietnamese villages, and even used magic power to repress the continued popular resistance. If that is true, the relationship between the Viet and the other tribes on the upper reaches of the Red River must have been established earlier than it had been thought to be.

Much more time and energy are needed to correct the mistakes and errors committed by foreign scholars in the first part of the 20th century concerning Vietnamese arts, especially about the period from the 11th to the 12th century, an important period which might be described as the renaissance period of the national culture after more than one thousand years of inertia under Chinese rule, a period once erroneously called "Dai La art" period by a French scholar who ascribed all its cultural achievements to the Chinese general Kao Piang back in the eight century.

Through more elaborate studies of the dates and style, Vietnamese researchers have restored to this period its true name: *the Ly art*. However, a question remains: why this sudden appearance of the Ly art which was to become a model period for the Vietnamese arts? Would it not be the last ripples of a common art in the whole of Southeast Asia as shown in the stupas and the very elaborate, balanced and symmetric decorative motifs on stone and baked earth relics which can be regarded as classical models in their own right? Did the kings of the Ly dynasty, out of their fervent wish to build and consolidate an independent nation and of their need to build a national, sovereign culture, welcome these last ripples and by means of the nation's energy and intelligence, add a glorious page to the Vietnamese civilisation?

As they stand before the art relics of the 16th century, Vietnamese art researchers could not help marvelling at their diversity and originality, and also at the commercial value of many art products. In fact, only in that period could the plastic artists come out of their anonymity to record their names on some of the most famous ceramic articles. The appearance of a large number of statues of the Maritime Bodhisattva — the protector of seafarers — led one to think of the first sea-borne Vietnamese merchants. This happened under the Mac dynasty which old-time historians marred by prejudices have always regarded as an usurper of the throne of the Le.

Accordingly, there were only recriminations, not a single praise for the achievements which this dynasty had recorded in the economic and cultural fields over more than one hundred years, from the 16th to the 17th century. There arises the need for historians to reappraise the social situation in Vietnam in that period. However, in the eyes of the art circles, it undoubtedly marked a new period, that of the Mac art.

In early 1972 when the first exhibition of wooden sculptures at the communal houses was held in Hanoi, it immediately captured the admiration of the public which considered it a source of pride for the national arts long neglected by the scholars. While studying the aesthetic sense reflected in the engravings and sculptures at the communal houses, art researchers were struck by the predominance of asymmetry and other unorthodox methods of the authors, such as their view of their objects from above or from different sides. The question remains: why did this characteristically folk sculptural art wait until the 17th century to blossom? Is it because the Vietnamese feudal regime which be-

came firmly established only in the 15th century with the Le dynasty, had soon revealed its weaknesses through territorial contests among the warlords and also through the struggle between the two tendencies in art, orthodox and popular, with the latter inexorably gaining the upper hand? It also suggests that even with all the constraints and repression by the feudal regime through the propagation of Confucianism, the Vietnamese farmers still retained part of their freedom and the folk artists, their relative freedom of creation. Is this also an expression of the age-old hope for the liberation of man?

Not until after 1975, with the reunification of the country, could the young art researchers have an opportunity to make a comprehensive assessment of the ancient art relics in the whole country. In particular, with regard to Hue, the capital of the Nguyen, the last feudal dynasty in Vietnam, where lie a big number of palaces and sepulchral architectures, a city regarded by the French as a second Florence, a reappraisal is absolutely necessary.

While during the twenty years of partition of the country we could only understand the art of the Nguyen dynasty mainly through its decline under the reigns of Khai Dinh and Bao Dai (in the 20's of this century), numerous examples of which can be found in the North, we can now have a real contact with its essence manifested through its rising period in the early 19th century. The research has just begun, but some art workers have detected in it, besides its own specific aspects, many traits of the mainstream of the national art and the continuity of the national art tradition.

Many questions, however, remain unanswered, such as how to explain the decorative motifs like the dragon and phoenix, leaves and flowers, clouds and skies, mountains and rivers, birds and animals... Obviously, they cannot be simple decorations. They represent something deeper symbolizing the thinking and sentiments of the population, the spiritual and perhaps also material life of society in those days. Our task is to "decode" them. Take the dragon, a mythological creation, for instance. Exhaustive research has been made to explain and interpret it, to compare its varied representations through different periods and also with its motifs found in other cultures in Asia. In the ancient Vietnamese art, does it represent the God of Agriculture or the symbol of royal power? Is it a modified representation of the Snake God, or the crocodile as mythology and artistic representations would suggest, or, the Makara marine devil, a monster orginating from the elephant? If the representation of the dragon — a familiar motif in the Vietnamese arts — could be explained, it would be a great contribution to the understanding of other arts as well as a fuller comprehension of the true essence of the ancient arts of the nation.

To study the ancient arts is a major task of the Vietnam Arts Research Institute. Founded more than twenty years ago, the Institute has become the centre for a scientific appraisal and reappraisal of the artistic values of ancient relics. Its cooperation with other research institutes bearing upon arts is broadening year after year, laying the foundation for inter-branch research programmes on a multilateral basis in order to build up a national and modern Vietnamese art.

NGUYEN TIEN CANH
Deputy Director
Vietnam Arts Research Institute.

THE THAI...

(Continued from page 26)

see the boat pass safe and sound the dangerous meanderings. But the correct explanation is to be found in the position of the swallow in old Thai culture: the swallow and the dragon symbolize two contrasts such as male and female, father and mother, boy and girl, mountain and river, sun and rain, big and small, white and black, high and low...

Moreover, to shape the boat like this, the Thai who steers a boat wishes to have the force and beauty of a swallow.

He should have keen eyes as those of a swallow to find a safe way out of the rapids, as after each soil erosion and landslide, the course of the river may change and rapids may appear unexpectedly. The boatman should be as faithful as a swallow. He should go and return in time, to bring happiness to his family like a swallow which returns in each spring.

Facing the danger of being driven away by the *Han* (Chinese) expansionists, the Thai who originally lived in South China had to wander many times in search of a home. They got accustomed to live near a river and travel on boats which enabled them to go faster to dispute the land with their opponents who were not skilful in using water transport means. So they could occupy the fertile plains along the river banks and build there a stable and rich culture.

Braving the deluge of bombs and shells dropped and fired by the French in the Northwest and Dien Bien Phu campaign, a swallow-tail boat appeared suddenly from a grotto or a bush, carrying cadres under the nose of the enemy. In the light of torches, convoys of swallow-tail boats carried soldiers, porters, food, ammunition, to the Northwest and Dien Bien Phu, making them famous names in our history. ●

A PROBLEM IN FAMILY LIFE

Two main relationships govern the whole of family life: relations between husband and wife, and relations between parents and children. Marriage is the prerequisite of the family. The Vietnamese Law on Marriage and the Family says in Part III, Article 11: "Husband and wife are duty-bound to be loyal to each other, to love, respect, and care for, each other, to help each other make progress, and to carry out together good family planning."

A major issue of concern at present is that of marriage and divorce. The marriage of an ill-suited couple often ends up with a divorce. What is the situation in Vietnam now?

According to reports from law courts at different levels, on an average 1,600 to 2,500 divorce suits were filed each year from 1981 to 1984. The figure rose to almost 3,000 in 1985, and was even higher in 1986. The reasons were different from one region to another. Preliminary studies have pointed to four concrete ones:

— Consequences of the marriage of minors, of forcible marriage, of bigamy (more than 50% of the cases);

— Great differences in age, physical incompatibility, long separation, adultery, prolonged mutual suspicion;

— Incompatibility in manners, behaviour, way of life, differences in educational standards, disagreements over the method of education of children.

— Conflicts among members of the family, in particular, between the wife and her parents-in-law; problems which have newly arisen.

— Marriage of convenience constitutes another source of trouble because it unites people without mutual love. There are persons who get married with a view to using his or her spouse as a stepping-stone to honour or wealth. Marriages of this kind often lead to divorce.

Many of the pleas for divorce are well grounded. There are, however, couples who have no good reasons to want to get separated. Most of such people are prompted by selfishness and are irresponsible to themselves and their children, and to society as well.

A divorce, however legitimate, always results in unhappiness for the couple concerned and their children. Moreover, a divorce is not simply a private affair; it has a bad effect on society, too. There have been cases of people becoming law offenders after getting a divorce. Assault and battery has been committed in Hau Giang, Thuan Hai and Long An provinces and in Ho Chi Minh City as a result of property disputes folowing a divorce. What is of greater concern is the bad effects on children. Surveys made recently at four general-education schools in Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, Ha Son Binh and An Giang showed that of the 35 pupils of broken-up families studying there, 60% were rated poor, and 36% average. Only a few were rated good. Some turned very bad after their parents had remarried.

To curb irresponsible divorce and to help people lead a normal life after divorce require simultaneous ideological, legal and organizational measures. First of all greater emphasis must be laid on strict respect for the law, particularly the Law on Marriage and the Family, with a view to putting an end to vestiges of feudalism and combating selfishness.

It is very necessary to include the Law on Marriage and the Family in school programmes and introduce it to mass organizations to help inculcate, especially in young people, a correct concept of love and a sense of responsibility in family life.

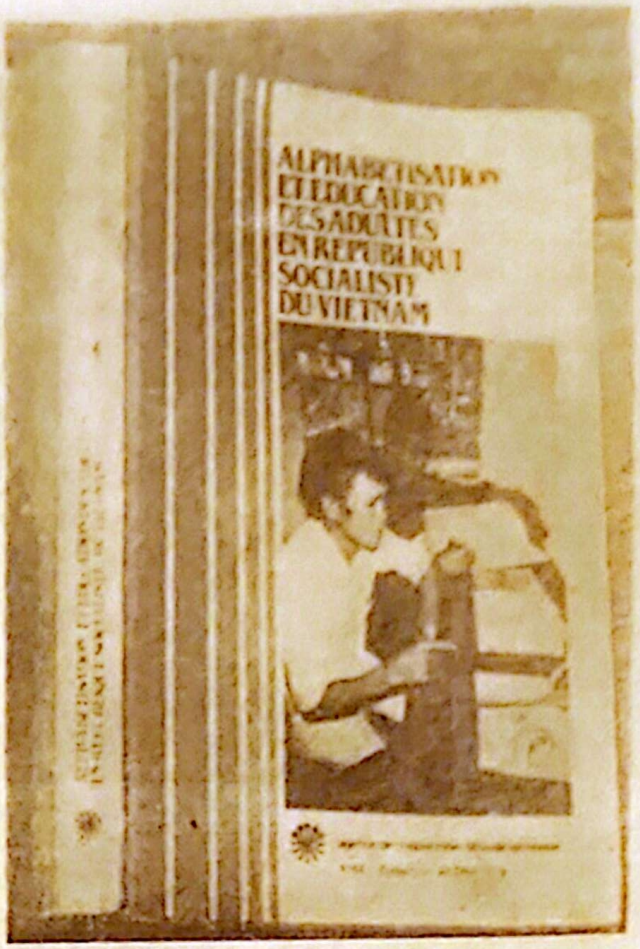
It is equally important to strengthen the Law on Marriage and the Family by a series of concrete support measures because man is "the sum total of all social relationships." Moreover, the State and mass organizations should help women in organizing their family life, in the education of their children, and also in their studies, so that identity of views may be reached between them and their husbands on day-to-day problems.

Firm steps should also be taken in time to deal with violations of the Law on Marriage and the Family. This is believed to be very effective in preventing hasty divorce and other negative phenomena in family life.

P.T.H.

Book Review

ELIMINATION OF ILLITERACY AND ORGANIZATION OF ADULT EDUCATION IN THE SRV



This is the title of a 245-page book published by the *Association pour la Cooperation Culturelle et Technique* (ACCT) in Paris in 1984. Its authors are experts of member countries of ACCT working under the guidance of Prof. Guy Belloncle, ACCT consultant, and Ahmadou Touré, responsible for ACCT's Linguistic Cooperation Programme. It is a report of the seminar held in Vietnam at the end of 1983 with the collaboration of the Vietnamese Education Research Centre and the Ministry of Education.

During the two wars of resistance against foreign aggression for national independence and reunification, which lasted for 30 years (1945 — 1975) and ten years of peaceful construction (1975 — 1985), the elimination of illiteracy and the education of adults in Vietnam achieved great successes which were commended in the world press and at various international symposiums. Many people set great store by Vietnam's experience and regard our country as topping the list of Third World countries in this field. Still, the authors of the book believe that former documentation has not yet fully reflected Vietnam's achievements.

In their opinion, the greatest achievement recorded in Vietnam is the organization of "comprehensive alternate educational system" called "complementary education", something little known so far. What does it consist of ?

The first part of the book presents the fundamental policy under-lying the elimination of illiteracy and the great effort to teach the masses an "elementary education programme" and to organize complementary education. In Vietnam, after being freed from illiteracy and receiving an elementary education, people can attend complementary classes of the second and third level (junior and senior secondary), corresponding to regular general-education classes of the same levels. Young workers, peasants and cadres under 30 can attend entrance exams to colleges and vocational schools. Responsible cadres of more advanced age can attend special courses.

The second part of the book deals with various relevant geographical, historical, economic, political, cultural and social aspects of Vietnam. Particularly, the authors study the rural economy, paying great attention to the organization of production in cooperatives and co-op members' families in its relationship to the organization of education. The regular system of education (crèche, kindergarten, general-education school, colleges and universities) is also described in this part of the book, briefly but comprehensively.

The third part contains documents, mostly unpublished so far, on the organization of illiteracy elimination and complementary education in Vietnam :

1. Adult education — elimination of illiteracy and complementary education
2. Education policy for ethnic minorities
3. Administrative and managerial organization of complementary education
4. Directives on "technical instruction" in complementary education
5. Complementary education for middle-aged managerial cadres in the Mekong delta
6. Some characteristics of adult pupils and problems of complementary education
7. Formation of cadres and teachers for the elimination of illiteracy and for complementary education
8. Cam Binh commune, a model for the elimination of illiteracy and the organization of complementary education.

The fourth part is a systematic presentation of documents, figures, reports, exchanges of views, "all that was seen and heard" by the ACCT team during its "Mobile Study Conference" which took it to Hanoi, Quang Ninh, Hai Phong, Quang Nam — Da Nang, Nghia Binh, Phu Khanh and Ho Chi Minh City. During this 2,000-km trip from North to South Vietnam, the team visited 15 industrial and agricultural bases. It can be said that this final part is the "practical part" supplementing and illustrating the first parts, the "theoretical part".

One may say that the authors have grasped the gist of the principles of education in Vietnam: "Study should go together with practice", "Theory should be combined with actual work".

In the opinion of the authors, this book will be found of great interest in all Third World countries seeking to eliminate illiteracy.

PHAM CUONG

Students returning to school after liberation.

Photo: SPK

SCHOOLS AFTER THE REBIRTH OF THE COUNTRY

Eight years after the foundation of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, nearly 1.7 million children now go to school. In this country of over 181,000 square kilometres, the educational network expands as far as the remotest regions. Of the first degree schools, there are now about 2,100 establishments with nearly 3,500 teachers. One out of four inhabitants goes to school, a rate unknown so far in this country under any previous regime.

As in 19 other provinces and cities, due to Pol Pot's genocidal measures, the educational system in Kandal has to start from scratch: no schools, no teachers, no pupils. Braving all difficulties, the ancient students; literate people, teachers, now buckle down to the educational task. Many classes against illiteracy open in pagodas, private houses, in the gardens and even at the foot of big trees. We can see courses given by a teacher to a few pupils, and classes where pupils are older than the teacher, and where the pupils buy paper for the teachers to prepare lessons. Even there are families which reserve their only houses for the opening of a class. From a few teachers at the outset, Kandal now boasts of over 580 schools, from infant classes to secondary schools, in which about 180,000 pupils are attended to by over 5,000 teachers. The province has four secondary schools opened in the most populated districts for 2,400 children. The anti-illiteracy classes are run by thousands of teachers recruited among students, teachers and members of the Youth Union and Women's Union. Kandal has been recognized as the first province freed from illiteracy; this year 150,000 adults in the province attend complementary classes (from the first to the eighth form) opened at midday.

Together with the State, the inhabitants of Kandal have contributed over 6 million *riels* to rehabilitate old schools and build new ones and to buy school furniture and equipment. Sixty per cent of schools are made of bricks. The material basis of the schools is built with the money pooled by the inhabitants.

On our visit to Bai Chan elementary school, we remark that an atmosphere of complete silence and discipline prevails in this educational establishment. The school ground is neat and clean; the pupils' bicycles are put in good order; the emulation movement is clearly announced on a board together with the names of the standard bearers. We are overjoyed as if we have visited a vanguard school having a dozen years of intense activity to its credit.

The exhibits displayed at the traditional house of Bai Chan school are the epitome of the history book of this school: built with 40,000 *riels* and thousands of work days of the local inhabitants, the school has now enough rooms for eight hundred children. Besides their regular classes, they also learn to farm the land, to practise handicrafts, to clean their villages and to give assistance to families of war martyrs and invalids, and to make school articles.

The rebirth of education in Kampuchea gives us a firm confidence in the future of this beautiful land.

NGOC QUA

VIETNAM AWAITS YOU

Road leading to Chapa township.
Photo: VAN HANH

Cat Ba Beach (Hai Phong).
Photo: NGUYEN TAN

Keo Pagoda (Thai Binh province).
Photo: THE THUAN

Hydrangea flowers.
Photo: TRAN SON

FINE ART HANDICRAFT PRODUCTS FOR EXPORT

● *Ceramics in Thu Duc district, Ho Chi Minh City.*

● *Lacquerware in Binh Thanh ward, Ho Chi Minh City.*

Photos: PHAM DO

● *Bamboo-blind made by Hoi An cooperative, Quang Nam — Da Nang.*

Photo: BAO HANH

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